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Kardoo, the Hindoo girl







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KARDOO,
THE HINDOO GIRL

✓
BY HARRIETTE G. BRITTAN,

MISSIONARY SENT TO CALCUTTA BY THE "WOMAN'S UNION
MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF AMERICA FOR HEATHEN LANDS."

SECOND EDITION.



NEW YORK:
WILLIAM B. BODGE,
1869.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE MISSION BANDS OF THE "WOMAN'S UNION
MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF AMERICA FOR HEATHEN
LANDS."

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS: Knowing how deeply your feelings of interest have been excited towards the poor secluded women of the Zenanas of India, I have written in one continuous story, a number of incidents that have come to my knowledge since my sojourn in this land.

My principal object has been to give you an insight into the manners, habits, and modes of life of these poor heathen sisters, and to rouse, if possible, stronger feelings of love and commiseration towards them, than you have hitherto possessed. I wish also to interest many others who have heretofore known little and cared less about these count-

less numbers of their own sex, who are living lives of hopeless degradation, and then sinking to eternal death. If this little book shall arouse others to join you in your labor of love, in working and praying for these poor helpless beings, one object will be accomplished.

I trust also that by comparing your lives with those of Hindoo girls, you will learn to think less of the little privations you may sometimes be called to endure, and have hearts more filled with gratitude to God, that you were born in a Christian, and not a heathen land.

With earnest prayers that this may be its effect, I beg you to accept this little book, from

Your loving friend,

H. G. BRITTAN.

CALCUTTA.

PREFACE.

IN presenting this little book, illustrative of the condition of heathen women in India, to the friends of our Mission work, but few words are needed to commend it to their kind interest.

Its author is the beloved and faithful missionary of a voluntary, undenominational organization of Christian women in America, formed in 1861. Appreciating that the gospel of Christ alone, has placed the women of our own favored land in the happy and enviable position they occupy, they have sought by the direct agency of their own sex, to elevate and Christianize the women of the East, whose idolatry and superstition have doomed them to lives of degradation and bitterness.

The readers of the "Missionary Link," the organ of the "Woman's Union Missionary Society," will recognize many of the facts and incidents of the following pages, as they were given in the journal of Miss Brittan. As she

has been an eye-witness of many scenes similar to those she has here portrayed, we are more willing to assert in the words of her fellow-laborers, that "this sketch is an undeniably truthful picture" of the lives of high-caste women in the Zenanas of Hindoos.

The book was written with the desire that its proceeds should be devoted to the purchase of Mission-premises in Calcutta, known as the "American Home" for the use of the missionaries and the work of the "Woman's Union Missionary Society."

We doubt not that each member of our "Mission Bands" to whom the little volume is dedicated, will take delight in owning, by this means, one share at least in the "Home" which forms the centre of our work in India. But we come now to many idolized daughters of Christian homes, who have little thought of or cared for their sex in heathen countries, and ask if they will not arouse from the day-dreaming and pleasure-seeking which have wrapped their souls in lethargy, and put forth at least one effort for those who dwell "in the land of the shadow of death."

S. D. D.

NEW YORK, March, 1869.

KARDOO,

THE HINDOO GIRL.

CHAPTER I.

My name is Kardoo. What a strange name, I think I hear some of you say. Is it a boy's name? No, it is a girl's name, but not that of an American child. My home is far away from yours, in a beautiful country called India.

In that country, as you know, are the highest mountains in the world, the tallest trees, and the most beautiful flowers and birds, with very much to delight the eye to look upon; but there is very lit-

the true happiness here, because very few of my people know any thing about the true God, the "God of love."

I have read many stories of children who have lived in your country; how much care their kind friends take of them, how faithfully they are taught, and especially how they are told of their great Father God, who loves them and takes care of them, and of the dear Saviour who died for them, and has gone to prepare a home for them in heaven.

When I read these stories, I thought perhaps you would like to hear something of the life of a Hindoo girl, for there are thousands who live just such a life as mine; and then I am sure you will thank God you were born in a Christian land.

Well, as I said, my name is Kardoo. My father was a lawyer, who cared lit-

tle for his practice beyond the fame it brought to him. He was of good caste, and possessed great wealth. He had received a good education, and prided himself on his learning. This I heard from others. I could not know it myself, because, being a girl, I saw very little of my father after I was four years old. The customs of our country forbid females to appear in the apartments of the men, or in the daytime a man to be seen in the room used by his wife and children.

My father was a tall, noble-looking man, with a grave expression of countenance. When I did see him, he always spoke kindly and pleasantly to me ; but he never took me up in his arms and kissed me ; he never set me on his knee and showed me pictures, or told me pretty stories, as your father does. No ; I was a girl ! There was no need for me

to know any thing but how to cook* and to braid my hair. When I was a little baby my father used to pet me; but as I grew older, he took less and less notice of me, and I knew nothing of that beautiful love and respect a child should have for a father.

But my mother, my dear, sweet mother! how shall I tell you of my love to her? She was a very high caste woman, and like many of her caste, very fair; her skin just dark enough to give a rich, warm glow to her complexion; her eyes of a liquid softness, beaming with love and tenderness, shaded by long silken lashes; exquisitely formed feet and hands; and a voice low and soft, whose every tone was music. Such was my mother—a being tender and gentle, with a heart whose love was deep and devo-

* All women, even of the highest caste, cook for their husbands. It is a great disgrace not to be a good cook.

ted, and a soul capable of strong religious feeling. O my mother, my mother! would that you had known "the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent!"

I had one brother, about four years older than myself. Two younger little ones died, and when I was nine years old another dear baby brother was given to us. Thou precious little one, of what joy and of what anguish wast thou the cause!

CHAPTER II.

I SHOULD like to describe to you the house in which I lived, but I am afraid I cannot set it plainly before you, for you have never seen any thing like it. It was large, built of brick, and covered with a thick white plaster, called chunam, made from the powdered shells of a small kind of snail. When this is first put on the walls, it looks clean and white, but after one rainy season it becomes discolored, almost black.

If you should look at our house on the side towards the street, you would see nothing but a high white wall, with an arched doorway opening into the street, and above that, another door opening into a narrow verandah that runs along the front of the house. In

this verandah the babus* would sit of an evening. In very few of these houses do you see any windows, and the few they have, are small and barred like those of a prison, instead of having glass. In the rainy season these windows are elosed by shutters on the inside.

You enter through the lower door into a narrow passage which leads under the house; then you come into a square court, open to the heavens. The house is built around this court on each of the four sides. Two broad verandahs, an upper and a lower one, are on three sides of it. Into these verandahs a great many doors open from different rooms. The lower rooms are used for store-houses, carriage-houses, servants, etc. The upper rooms are used by the babus. Some of these are very handsomely furnished with matting, chairs, carpets,

* Babus—native gentlemen.

couches, pictures, placed in the greatest confusion, and rarely dusted or kept clean. Thick black cobwebs hang everywhere, it being considered a sin to disturb a spider. Into this part of the house none of the females are permitted to enter after they are three or four years old.

On the fourth side there is no upper verandah, the lower one being much higher and wider, having an elevated roof like a dome, and supported on large pillars. This is a sort of temple, or gods' house. It is adorned with many chandeliers and with pictures of the gods; and here, at the time of the Poojah, or feast of the god, of which I will tell you, an image of the god is placed. At one side of this god's house, part of the upper verandah is screened off by open cane-work, similar to that which is used for chair seats. Behind this screen, when

there are no lights, the females of the house may place themselves at the time of any Poojah or tomasha* to witness all they can, but never do they join in any of the festivities.

From this, you go into another passage, and again you find yourself in another verandah, running around a second square building, enclosing an open court, smaller than the first one I mentioned. This is the women's part of the house. The lower part is used for the cows, cook-rooms, etc. The upper rooms are used by the women and children of the family. These rooms have no windows or doors, except those opening into the verandah, so that the women never catch a glimpse of any thing going on in the street.

From this court, the women's court,

* Tomasha—fun frolic, the term generally used for any amusement,

we go through a passage under the house into a spot of ground with a high wall around it, within which is a tank or pond, with a few plantains and cocoanut-trees around it. This is our only garden. Though this tank is fed by a spring, it gets very green and muddy in the dry season; but when the rains fill it up, it is clean and fresh. However green and muddy, the women bathe in this every day, for the Hindoo religion commands this to be done.

Perhaps you will think, as the babus have handsome things in their rooms, they would also give nice furniture to adorn the rooms where the women spend all their lives; but not so. The floors are the same as the walls, of brick covered with chunam. On these we sit, without carpet or mats, a stool or chair. There is a bedstead, with a mat covering it for a bed, two or three round,

hard pillows, a box or chest with a padlock, in which to keep jewels or other valuables, and a clothes-horse; these, with a brass lota or drinking vessel, complete the furniture of a room where a woman passes her life from her birth to her death, only changing from her father's to her husband's house.

I had no beautiful garden to play in, no toys, no books to amuse me, no pleasant walks in the fields, no school to attend. None of these things are for Hindoo girls. Oh, that you would have thankful, grateful hearts to God for all his good gifts to you!

CHAPTER III.

Now that I have tried to describe our house, I must tell you something about our way of living. This large house belonged to my grandfather. He had six sons, my father being the oldest. When each of these sons married, they brought home their wives ; and as all marry very young in our country, they soon had children of a marriageable age. At one time we had a household of seventy people.

My own mother was my father's second wife. He had married her while his first wife was living, as she was childless. It is almost an unknown thing for a Hindoo to take a second wife while the first one is living, unless she be childless,

when it is generally done.* The first wife of my father died before I was born, but I have been told that she suffered much from jealousy, and hated both my mother and her child.

I knew and loved all my uncles better than I did my father; for younger brothers may see their older brothers' wives, go into their apartments, and converse with them; but an elder brother may not see his younger brother's wife.

Every wife has an apartment for herself and her children, though a number of us would often sit together in the verandah opening on the inner court. If, however, by any accident, one of the husbands should be at home in the daytime, and wished to go to his wife's apartment, he would cough, or make a great noise with his feet; then every

* The Koolinee Brahmins are an exception to this rule, as they sometimes marry twenty or thirty women.

woman would draw her veil, or chud-dah, over her face, and fly to her own room, until he went away.

My grandfather was the head of his house, and all the men submitted implicitly to his rule in the direction of their wives and children; while among the women, my grandmother, or Tuekoo-Ma, as she was called, was supreme, no one daring to dispute her commands. No husband could protect his wife from any unkindness, or even cruelty, on the part of the Tuekoo-Ma.

The children are all spoiled in India, being allowed their own way in almost every thing. They are continually with the mother; and the fond parent who dotes on her children, would not punish a boy, because he is of the superior sex; and she will not punish a girl, because she knows what a slave she will be when married; therefore she wishes to grant

her every pleasure while she is a child. Thus children grow up without any wholesome restraint, but with a true, deep love for their mothers.

Until I was six years old, my only articles of dress were a gold necklace, some gold bracelets, and some silver bangles on my ankles. At that age I began occasionally to wear a sarree. This is the only article of clothing worn by females. It consists of a long strip of cloth a little over a yard wide, generally edged with a bright-colored border. This is fastened round the loins, and then brought up over the chest and head. The upper part, which covers the head, is called the chuddah, or veil; but little girls never wear this over the head until they are married; and even after marriage, when they are in the father's home, the head is left uncovered.

Our clothing was only one thickness of cloth over the body, and was generally of mull muslin; but at Poojahs, or on special occasions, when we were supposed to be dressed, the material was as thin as gauze.

My time used to be spent playing with the other children, though we had no regular plays, as you have; trying to help my mother cook, combing or braiding her long-hair, or lying on her lap listening to stories told by her or some of the other women, or to what was far worse, the gossip of the barberess who used to come every week to cut the toe and finger nails of the female part of the household, and to dye our fingers and feet with henna*—a barber performing the same office for the men.

It was amazing the amount of mischief

* Henna, a sort of paint, bright red, which remains for several days.

this woman would do, the fearfully depraved and licentious stories that she would carry from house to house, and to which all, even the smallest child, was permitted to listen. The more vile and polluting the story, the more it was enjoyed by the listeners.

I will here give you one of my mother's stories; it is about the best one I ever heard told by a Hindoo.

THE STORY OF A FAKIR* AND AN IGNORANT MAN.

An ignorant man asked a fakir: "Who are you, what are you doing, and why are you seated here?"

The fakir replied: "I am a beggar in God's service. I have abandoned the world that I may walk in God's ways.

* A fakir is a religious beggar, or one supposed to be very holy, who holds intercourse with the gods, and to have subdued all his earthly passions and propensities. This story is taken from a book of Hindoo tales.

though to attain this I may have to endure pain and suffer privation and sorrow. I am studying human nature, and the two classes of men of whom the world is composed: the one given to the pleasures of life, the other engaged in the service of holiness and God. In man's opinion there are several classes of persons; but in God's infallible judgment there exists but two, the good and the bad."

The ignorant man observed: "You say that you are in God's service, and that you know him, and are acquainted with man's nature; then pray allow me to put to you three questions, which, if you fail to answer, I will esteem you not only a liar, but a deceitful, wicked person, deluding others to earn for yourself a dishonest livelihood. If it happens to be as I think, I will beat you away from here, and take all you possess."

The fakir replied: "By this speech you show your own weak intellect; but I am satisfied with your proposal. Pray tell me in what matter you desire my opinion."

The ignorant man said: "Fakir, the first question is this: Show God to me, and tell me of what color he is?"

"The second question is: Satan being formed of fire, and hell composed of the same element," (they have learned to believe in Satan and hell from the Mus-sulmans,) "how then can fire make any impression on Satan?"

"The third is: You say that whatever is done in the world, is executed by God himself, and not man, for man can do nothing by his own power. Is it so, or not?"

The fakir began to muse for awhile on the subject; then, after a short time, laughed, and looked at the ignorant man,

and asked if those were all the questions he had to put.

“Yes, father, and I have to request their answer.”

The fakir, looking here and there, took up a ball of clay, which he aimed at the ignorant man's head with a force that stunned him.

The ignorant man soon roused, and began to make a great noise and to call out for help, crying and telling the village men that the fakir had hit his forehead so hard a blow with a stone that he was quite faint.

When the men had heard his complaint, they began to call the fakir all kinds of ill names, and to address him thus: “You say that you are God's beggar, but your culpable action shows that you have come from the kingdom of Satan. We will take you away to the Cazi (judge), and then we will

see who will protect such a pretender."

So the men dragged him before the cazi of the place. The cazi inquired why they had offered insult and violence to the poor fakir. The people said: "Cazi sahib," (sahib, sir,) "this fakir is a pretender. He is of so violent a temper, that he has struck this poor fellow a severe blow with a stone on his forehead, which has nearly killed him, and all this cruel usage he has perpetrated too, without the least provocation."

Hearing this, the cazi was highly enraged at the fakir, and inquired why he had inflicted pain, without any reason for it.

The fakir, seeing and hearing things not quite consonant with the character of a cazi, told him that he too appeared to be wanting in understanding.

The cazi sahib became more angry at

what he considered the fakir's insolence. He remarked: "You, father, appear in sheep's clothing, but through the flimsy coverlet the wolf is seen. For what reasons, and by what indications, do you recognize me to be a man of perverted judgment?"

The fakir said: "Be not angry, for anger is the symbol of ignorance. Consider this truth, and reflect on the subject of that man's three questions."

The cazi, calling the man, asked what were the three questions which, being put to the fakir, gave him offence, and led him to retort so rudely.

Hearing the questions, the cazi, turning towards the fakir, asked, "Fakir sahib, was it proper for you to strike the man, instead of answering him?"

The fakir said: "I have by that deed answered his three questions already. His first question was: 'Show God to

me, and tell me of what color he is?" My answer is : Show me your pain, and tell me its color, and I will show you God, and tell you of what color he is. His second question was : 'Satan is formed of fire, and hell is composed of the same element ; how then can fire make any impression on Satan ?' My answer is : Man is admitted to have clay for his origin. This man asserts that fire makes no impression on fire ; if so, a ball of clay cannot hurt a body of clay. I did not use any stick or stone to strike him, but a lump of clay. According to his argument, therefore, I am justified, for I could not have hurt him. His third question was : ' Whatever is done in the world, is executed by God himself, and not man, for man can do nothing by his own power.' My answer is : If nothing is done by man, then I have not struck him ; but God, according to his showing, did it,

and I am therefore guiltless of the charge."

This is, as I before said, about the best Hindoo story I ever heard. There is scarcely another that you would consider right or proper for children to hear. Most of the stories were about the lives of the gods and goddesses, or about the transmigration of the soul. The Hindoos believe that after death the soul assumes the body of some other human being, or some animal, thus passing from one to another until it has overcome all its evil passions, and become perfectly holy. We had no beautiful stories to teach us to be good and holy, and thus to be happy.

CHAPTER IV.

AND now I suppose you would like to hear what was our food, and how we ate it. Take a look at us as we are eating our dinner, and what do you see? A father and mother, with their children, sitting down around a table spread with a clean cloth, and before eating, lifting up their hands and asking a blessing, and giving thanks to the great Giver of all? No, dear friends, you would see nothing of this sort.

Our principal food consisted of curry and rice. Curry is a mixture of spices and saffron, in which meat, fish, or vegetables are cooked. But Hindoos never eat any animal food, except fish; therefore ours was always a fish or vegetable

curry. It was always eaten with rice, which my mother prepared twice a day.

The largest and best portion was always placed on a large brass plate and carried to my father's room for him. After he had eaten all he required, and his plate was brought back, our mother and we might then eat. The remainder of the food was then put on another brass plate, placed on the earthen or brick floor, with a lota, or brass drinking-vessel, beside it. We—that is, my mother and her children—then seated ourselves on the floor around the plate, and each one putting his or her hand into the dish, would take up a small portion of rice, and squeezing that, with the curry, into a round ball, would toss it down the throat.

After we had eaten as much as we wanted, we would take up the brass lota, not putting it to our lips, but throwing

our heads back, hold the lota up high, and thus let the water pour down our throats. We had no spoons or knives or forks. Then our meal was over, without one thought of thankfulness to Him who constantly supplied our returning wants.

Could you have seen us at our meals, you would have wondered as much as I did the first time I saw Europeans sit down to eat. Now though we had a good man-servant, my mother spent much of her time in the preparation of different kinds of curries; for to excel in cooking was at that time the only accomplishment to which a Hindoo woman might aspire. Helping my mother to burn the spices for the curry, braiding her hair, and listening to her strange stories of the gods and goddesses were my chief employments.

Besides our two principal meals of

curry and rice, we had a great many different kinds of sweetmeats which we would eat at any or all times of the day. They were composed of ghee, (clarified butter,) sugar, milk, and sometimes coconut. Of these we were very fond, and would eat a number in the day.

Besides the fruits you have seen, such as plantains and oranges, we had many others, such as the guava, mango, leach, jack-fruit, etc. God has been very bountiful to my native land, in making the earth to bring forth abundantly; but, alas, alas, the poor people know not Him "who is daily loading them with benefits."

My infant lips were never taught to lisp my heavenly Father's name. My mother never told me of that good Shepherd, the dear Saviour, who gathers the little lambs in his arms, and folds them to his bosom.

But you will ask, was I never taught to pray to any god? When I was quite a little child, I was told that there were many, many gods; and as I before said, I listened to strange and wonderful stories about them, and we had many pictures and images of them in the house; but until I was six years old, though I often saw my mother performing poojah, (worship,) I was never taught to do so.

My mother! oh what bitter anguish of soul comes to me when I think of thee! Thy name embodies to me all that is pure, gentle, and lovely! My mother had, as I have said, a truly devotional spirit—a strong religious tendency. The god to whom she had devoted herself was Sheve. This god is worshipped by every woman in India, but by some only occasionally, or on his annual feast-day.

Each god has his annual feast, when he is particularly worshipped; but per-

haps little thought of during the rest of the year. A Hindoo, also, does not worship every god, each one choosing for himself or herself the particular ones to whom he will pay most respect and devotion. They believe really that there are only a very few gods and goddesses, but that each of these has become incarnate many times; that is, appeared and lived in the world under different forms; that he must be addressed for special gifts; and as in the Romish church, certain images of the Virgin are supposed to possess more power than others, so here the same god under one form is supposed to possess more power than he does under another.

My mother spent about an hour a day in the worship of Sheve. This is very unlike the Christian's worship of the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," which is simply going before

Him, to thank Him for his goodness, to ask pardon for our many sins against Him for Jesus' sake, and that He will make us better, and beseeching Him, as our Father, to supply our wants and take care of us. This is how a Christian child is taught to pray, and this they can understand when they are very little.

It took me a long time to learn how to pay poojah to Sheve. I sat by my mother and watched her day after day, and week after week, and month after month, before I could do it right. She had a little image of the god about three inches high, made of mud. Before this she would sit, and sprinkling it many times with holy water from the Ganges river, present to it flowers, grains of rice, little bits of sweetmeats, and nuts; certain forms of words being used at each part of the ceremony. The poo-

jah was not performed if one word was omitted or said at the wrong time, or if a flower was laid to the right, when it ought to have been laid to the left. There were a hundred motions and gestures that had to be learned, before the worship could be paid. I was a long time in learning this, but my mother was not contented until I could perform the whole ceremony. The other women of the house contented themselves with bowing, touching their heads to the idols, or placing grains of rice or flowers on the shrine. God Sheve is supposed to be the creator. To him every woman prays that she may have that greatest of all blessings, offspring; and him the loving mother continues to worship, propitiating him for her children.

In addition to Sheve, Kali and Jugernaut were the gods worshipped by

our family ; and their annual feasts were kept up at great cost at our house. Then large images of the gods were made, and placed in the gods' house in the courts. A small car also of Jugger-naut was made, and all the male servants, with the young boys of the family, would draw it about the court and the neighboring streets with infinite delight. I remember once asking my mother why it was that Juggernaut was so ugly. In answer, she told me this story :

A very rich rajah in the country, built a magnificent temple, and devoted it to one of the great gods. He then said that he must have a new and very beautiful image carved to place in his temple, and the Brahmins would pray the great god to come and dwell in this image, to make it noted and renowned as a great and powerful god.

He therefore gave notice everywhere that he wanted a good mistri* to come and make this image. It must be more beautiful than any thing that had ever been made. If it was so, and the rajah was satisfied, he would give him an immense sum of money; but if it was not so, the mistri should be killed. Hearing this, no mistri dare undertake the work, and the beautiful temple remained for several years without any god to inhabit it.

At last an old man with a bundle of carpenter's tools, presented himself to the rajah.

The rajah looked at him a minute, and said, "I am sure that you cannot make any thing beautiful." The mistri was old, dirty, and oh, so ugly! He squinted with both eyes, had red hair, a crooked back, and bandy legs. In fact,

* Mistri, a carpenter or other workman.

he was a monster of ugliness. The old man insisted that he could make the most beautiful image that ever was seen.

At last the rajah, finding he could get no one else to try, gave his consent; "but remember," he said, "if you do not make it very beautiful, I shall take your life."

To this the mistri agreed, but with one condition, that all the time he was employed in his work he should be shut up in the temple, and not in the least interfered with till his work was completed; that if the temple doors were opened, or he was interrupted in any way, he would immediately leave his work unfinished, and would never put another stroke to it. The rajah did not like this, as he wished to watch the progress of the work; but there was no help for it, as the old mistri would only

work upon his own terms, and the rajah could get no other to work at all.

The old mistri shut himself up in the temple, and for three months nobody saw him; no one could tell how he got food or water, for he never came out, and nobody went in to him.

During the whole day and night a most terrible noise and hammering were heard in the temple, sometimes in one part, sometimes in another.

The poor rajah was terribly frightened; it sounded as if his temple was being knocked all to pieces. At length, after some months had passed, and nothing had been seen of the mistri, though the noise continued as usual, the rajah went to the door of the temple, and after knocking a long time the mistri answered him. He told the rajah he was getting on beautifully with his work, but on no account to interrupt him again.

After this, the noise in the temple increased so much, that it seemed as if there were a hundred workmen hammering away with all their might, instead of one.

At last the poor rajah's patience became utterly exhausted. Afraid that his temple would be spoiled, after knocking in vain for the mistri to open the door, he had it burst open. The temple was the same as ever, and there stood the mistri in the middle of the floor, with the ugly little misshapen image, about a foot high, before him, with no hands, only stumps for arms, and without feet.

The rajah in a great rage asked him if he called that a beautiful figure.

"You have interrupted me before I had finished it," said the mistri; "no one shall dare to alter it, or add any thing to it. Ugly as it is, it is the great

god Juggernaut, and in that form shall he be worshipped all over India."

The rajah was in a fearful rage—aimed a blow to kill the mistri, when suddenly he changed from the ugly old man into a beautiful young man, and rose up into the air above the rajah's reach, saying, "As the great god Juggernaut all shall worship that." He then disappeared through the roof of the temple, leaving the rajah in great dismay, for now all knew the old mistri to be none other than the great god Mohadave, and his work, none would dare to touch; the figure must be left just as it was.

I then asked my mother why that Juggernaut had such a fine car, and went out for a ride sometimes, which none of the other gods did. She could not tell me; but I have learned the story since, and will give it to you here.

Juggernaut. is very fond of bathing, and in places where he is particularly worshipped,* his temple is placed by the side of a tank. The priests daily take him to bathe, and then dress him. But when the cold season commences, he one day takes a severe cold in his bath, and is laid up with a bad fever. He is ill for three weeks. This is the harvest-time of his priests, for during his illness his votaries come every day to inquire after his health, and to bring offerings of ghee, fruit, flowers, rice, goats, which of course all belong to the priests.

After three or four weeks he is pro-

* Though people may have images and pictures of these gods in their houses, yet when they want to pay them any particular reverence or homage, they will make a pilgrimage to some particular temple or shrine dedicated to the worship of the god they wish to honor. Here many Brahmin priests continually reside, who receive the offerings of pilgrims, say many prayers, and offer sacrifices for them.

nounced a little better, and it is said change of air will do him good. Wherever he has a temple built, one for his sister is placed about three miles off—consequently his great car is brought out, he is placed on it with a great many priests to take care of him, and thus in state he is drawn down to his sister's house. The people, frantic with joy at his recovery, draw the car along themselves; others throw flowers, clothes, etc.; and others even cast themselves under the heavy wheels of the car as an offering to the god. He remains at his sister's house for a week or two, and then is brought back to his own house in the same manner, though with much fewer demonstrations of joy.

At our house every year a small car of clay was made, and a clay image of the god placed upon it, and for the whole day it was dragged about with wild de-

light. In the night, sacrifices and poojah were offered to it, and the next morning both car and god were consigned to the Ganges. As they had been used for holy purposes, they must not be left to desecration, but must again become part of the sacred clay of the holy river. The excitement subsiding, Juggernaut was again forgotten in most places for another year.

Every household of standing has belonging to it a gooroo, or Brahmin priest, who is the head man at the celebration of poojah, marriages, shaads or ceremonies after death. This priest is permitted to enter the women's part of the house, to give them instruction in the rites and ceremonies of their religion. At any time when he wishes the females of the house to visit his wife, he sends his own palky for them, and it is a great insult to him if they do not go. They

never see him when visiting at his house, only his wife and the females of his family. These old Brahmin priests have full as much sway and power over the minds of the people here as the Romish priests have in Catholic countries.

When I was a little girl I went once or twice with my mother to the gooroo's house, also twice on a visit to her father's house. We went each time in a palky.

A palky is an upright box just high enough for a person to sit up in it. It is painted black. You get into it by doors at the sides, which slide back; and when these doors are shut it is as close as a box. It has a pole at each end, and is carried on men's shoulders. This would be brought into our verandah, my mother and I would get in, the door shut, and a thick red cloth would be covered over all, so that not one ray of light or breath of air could enter.

I well remember how frightened I was, how I crept close to my dear mother when the bearers lifted us up, when we would get into the noisy streets, and hear the strange confusion of sounds around us, but were not able to see any thing.

On these occasions I wore a sarree made of the finest gauze, my legs, arms, head, and neck loaded with jewelry—bracelets, and chains so heavy that they made me ache all over, though I was very proud of them. Those whom we visited gave us a profusion of sweet-meats, and then we would return home the same way.

When my mother went to my grandfather's house, however, she generally remained several days. Occasionally her relatives, or those of the other daughters-in-law, would visit us in the same way. Thus I have told you somewhat of our way of living.

CHAPTER V.

I WAS about eight years old when I began to think.

My uncle Chundro was a fine young man about eighteen years of age. I was very fond of him, and he used often to come to my mother's room after his school to play with me. One day he brought me some beautiful flowers, of which I was very fond. I kissed them, pressed them to my heart, laughed and talked to them.

Just then my mother was going to perform her poojah to Sheve ; she called me, and told me to give my flowers to the idol. At first I positively refused ; but she, speaking more sternly than I ever remember, commanded it to be done.

Crying and sobbing, I ran and flung them at the idol ; but not all her commands or entreaties then, could make me join in the worship. I ran away to my unele Chundro, (being a younger brother he was allowed to be in the women's verandah.) I told him my grief, and he tried to comfort me ; and pointing to the bit of blue sky seen from the verandah, he said, "Look, my little Kardoo, up there above the sky, there is a beautiful place called heaven. The great God lives there, and if you love him and are a good little girl, you will one day go to live in that beautiful place with him."

"I don't want to go there," I answered ; "for if he is like the Takoo (idol) my mother worships, he will take away all my pretty things, and never give me any thing."

"But he is not like that Takoo," said he. "He is the great God who made

every thing ; he made you, and he gives you all things that you have. He loves you like a father, and you must try to learn to love him. He has done so much for you, that you should love him better than anybody else, and try to do what will please him."

"But, uncle, my mother tells me that my father gives me my food and all things that I have. You say the great God gives them to me. How is that?"

"God gives them to your father, Kardoo, and he gives them to you. I do not know much about this God, but I am trying to learn, and I will teach you if you will listen to me." One of the other boys coming up to us just then, he quickly closed the book that he held in his hand, and moved away.

The next day my mother began to reprove me for my conduct about the flowers, and told me I ought to be wil-

ling to give all I had to the god. "He is a very great and powerful god, my child. He is the creator who made you and all other things."

"Did he make the flowers?"

"Yes; whatever he likes he can do."

"Then, if he can make as many as he likes, and when he likes, why does he want to take mine away? He is very greedy. But my uncle Chundro told me that Sheve was only mud, that he could not keep himself from being broken, if I were to throw him down; and he told me that the great God who made all things lives in heaven."

"What has your uncle been saying to you? Oh, my child, my child, don't listen to him; he has been reading the vile Christian books, and I fear they are turning him from the sacred religion of his fathers. I shall not let you go near him if he talks to you like this."

I loved my uncle very dearly, and these threats, prevented me from ever again telling her any thing he said on the subject of religion. The book I had seen him read was the Bible. He did not dare to talk much about it to others; but often, after this time, he would take me in his arms and tell me pretty stories, which I have since found were Bible stories; and how, or by what means I know not, but he impressed on my childish mind the conviction that I was a great sinner, and that if I could find no means of expiating those sins, I must be miserable for ever.

About this time we kept the festival or poojah of Kali in very great style and expense.

Kali is the goddess of vengeance, and she is generally worshipped by the Hindoos. All trouble they suppose comes from her, and in all time of affliction

they offer to her propitiatory sacrifices, and make promises of large gifts and offerings. But once a year, at the annual festival, almost every family of wealth has an image of her erected in the god's house, and all the friends and poor neighbors are invited to attend the feast.

At these feasts, females were rarely if ever present; and though rich and poor men were invited, and partook of the refreshments provided, yet there was a marked difference made. The more intimate friends of the household and the Brahmins were received in the babus' own rooms and in the verandah; those less intimate in the lower verandah; while the crowd of poor neighbors were not permitted to go above the court. If one of the more intimate friends was seen for an instant standing among the crowd, some one was instantly despatched to

bring him into the room above ; or if any man was seen above that they did not wish there, he was quickly invited to go below.

For a week before the poojah took place, the whole household was busy preparing for it. Immense piles of sweetmeats and curries of every kind were made by the females, while in the outer court other preparations were going on. This court, around which the house was built, was fifty feet square.

Every moment that my mother could spare me was spent behind the screen, watching what was going on below. They were whitewashing and clearing the court, putting up chandeliers, and posts from which to hang lamps, stretching a canvas roof over the open court. But that which I watched with the greatest interest was the construction of the Takoo, or god.

The figures—for there were two, as I shall describe to you—were first made just like a wooden skeleton ; then they were covered over thickly with straw, and then they were plastered over and made into shape with the saered mud or clay from the holy Ganges. After the whole is formed with the elay, it is left for two or three days to dry, and is then painted, and then placed in the gods' house to be worshipped.

Kali, as I before said, is the goddess of destruetion, or vengeance. She is represented as a gigantic woman of a deep blue color, standing on the body of a man of the same size, which is painted white. She has four hands : in one she holds a bleeding head ; in the second she brandishes a large knife ; while the other two are uplifted, but empty. Around her neek, for a garland, she has forty bleeding heads ; around her waist

a girdle of human hands. She is represented as loaded with jewelry, but stained in many places with the blood of the trophies she carries. Her tongue sticks out so far that it almost touches her chest. Her position is on the man's body, but starting back as if in horror. The reason of her being represented thus, is that she is worshipped only from fear; and it is thought that this appearance, and the story belonging to it, will inspire a salutary fear and terror, and indeed it does; for the impressions in this way made upon children in their earliest days are scarcely ever effaced.

The story told is this: A great giant rebelled against her, and would not worship her. So she set out to punish him. She is returning after slaying him and his forty sons: their hands she cut off and wears as a girdle, and their heads as a garland, while she carries the fa-

ther's head in her hand. As she is stalking along in triumph, not looking on the ground, she steps upon a man's body who is lying asleep. She starts back in horror, to find she is treading upon her husband whom she is bound to venerate.

But now to the poojah. During the day, immense piles of sweetmeats and fruits were placed in the gods' house—first to be offered in sacrifice to the goddess, then to be distributed to the guests. The gooroo, or family priest, with a number of other priests, arrived about seven o'clock. They took their place in front of the goddess, repeating a continuous succession of munters, (prayers, or sort of invocations,) until after ten o'clock. About eight o'clock the guests began to arrive, and continued coming in until after twelve. They took little or no part in the worship, that being appa-

rently confined to the priests. Beside them was a large tray of flowers, a vessel with the holy water of the Ganges, and a chafing-dish for burning incense. The priest would take a flower, say a munter over it, sprinkle it with holy water, then place it somewhere on or about the goddess. Hundreds were used in this way. Sometimes the performance would be varied by tinkling a small bell, upon which the priests would bow with their faces to the ground. The people looked on, but except, that occasionally, a man would go up the steps and bow, none seemed to take part in the worship.

During this time, there were six men, each with a drum almost as high as himself, with which he tried to make as much noise as possible, without in the least regarding either tune or time.* About ten

* In later days, I once went into a Roman-catholic

o'clock, three more drums were brought in, so large that the bodies of those who carried them were entirely concealed. Then there were trumpets and two or three gongs. One man with a heavy iron mallet struck a large iron shield, thus producing the deep tone of a bell.

One of the officiating priests then came down into the court, and a servant brought him a large pumpkin, a cucumber, and a bundle of sugar cane. Then, with a sharp knife, he instantly severed each one, the pieces flying about among the crowd, who eagerly picked them up. Then this old Brahmin began a wild, strange dance, with most extravagant gestures. In a few minutes all the

church, and saw them performing the service of the mass, and I was much surprised to see how much it resembled our Kali poojah. Instead of Kali poojah, however, there was a crucifix, with three tall candles on each side, the flowers, the burning incense, the ringing of the bell, and the bowing and kneeling of the priests, and the sprinkling with holy water.

drummers and musicians except the bellman began to dance around him, each carrying his instrument, and continuing to play upon it. At length the gooroo passed a lamp with ten burners up and down and around the idol ; he then suddenly prostrated himself before it ; instantly all the Brahmins and all the babus who were on or near the platform of the gods' house did the same ; the music ceased, and a general shouting and clapping of hands took place.

My uncle Chundro had just come to where I was standing. I turned and asked him the meaning of these shouts. " Listen, Kardoo," he said, " and try to understand. A long time ago our people were very ignorant ; then they thought that those images were themselves gods, but they are not so ignorant and stupid now. They cannot believe that those clay things which their own

hands have made are gods ; but they do believe that if they make this figure, and then the priests pray and invoke the goddess enough, she will descend from heaven and take up her abode in the image, thus blessing the house where she is. Now the gooroo has been praying for the goddess to come into this image, and when he lifted up the light and examined it just now, he said the goddess had arrived ; therefore the people prostrated themselves, not before the clay, but before the goddess supposed to be in the image."

"Do you believe this, Uncle Chundro?"

"No, Kardoo, I do not. I believe there is but one God, and he lives in heaven ; and if the Christian's book be true, he has forbidden us to make any image or representation of him."

"But, Uncle Chundro," I said, "to-

morrow that image will be thrown into the Ganges ; why is that ?”

He replied : “To-morrow morning the gooroo will say a prayer, thanking the goddess for her visit, and telling her now she may return home. She is supposed then to return to heaven ; but the image, though again only clay, is considered to have been made sacred by the residence of the goddess, therefore it is cast into the holy river.”

My uncle was called away ; I saw him no more that night. But the whole night was spent in feasting and watching the dancing girls. We also had a nautch, a sort of theatrical performance. The worship was all over. Formerly goats were offered with the sweetmeats in sacrifice to Kali, and sometimes human sacrifices, but the latter have been entirely done away with. After the shouts and exclamations that accompanied the

supposed arrival of the goddess had subsided, she was thought of no more that night. Such is the Kali poojah, one of the great acts of religious worship among the Hindoos.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after the poojah, my unele Chundro was talking to my mother, when she said to him : "Chundro, I was very sorry to see that you did not join in the acts of worship to our great goddess. You did not bow or prostrate yourself once before her. How can you expect that evil will be averted from your own head, or from that of our family, when so many of you only look on, instead of joining in the solemn act of worship?"

"Why, sister, you could not surely suppose that hideous thing which we had down there to be a divine or holy thing?"

"Not after the sacred presenece was gone, but during the time that Kali took up her abode in it, it was holy; and it

was your solemn duty to adore the visible presence. You and others of the household did not do it, and I fear calamities will befall our family."

"But, my sister, I cannot believe that a great and holy being could like to be represented, even for an hour, by an object such as that, or would take up its abode in it, or could wish to be regarded as so cruel and bloodthirsty. What would you think of any woman who could cut off the heads of her enemies, then hang them for a necklacc, all bleeding and ghastly, around her neck? You would shrink from such a woman with horror; and surely these gods ought to be better than we. No, I am disgusted with this our religion; it is only the Christian religion that teaches of a holy and pure God."

My mother burst into a passionate flood of tears. "O wicked blasphem-

mer," she said. "remain not here, or you will call down the vengeance of the angry goddess on me as well as yourself. Why, why have I listened to you so long, instead of telling your mother how these beef-eating Christians are destroying you!"

"My sister, I have not said I was a Christian; but indeed, indeed I wish that I had been born one, that I might not be tempted to distrust and abhor the religion of my fathers."

"What is this that I hear, my son, my son, the jewel of my heart, my pearl, the star of my lips, my treasure!" exclaimed my grandmother, who had come into the room behind him, without his being aware of it, and heard his last remark. "Oh, what is this that I hear; you, my moon of gold, my star of silver, my necklace of pearl, to wish or to think of such a thing as being a Christian!"

to be like those beef-eating, unclean Christians, those filthy outcasts !”

“ Mother, I am not a Christian, but I have read much about their religion. It teaches of a holy God—a God of love, not one of vengeance, like that hideous image we had below. This great God is our Father, holy and pure, and he wishes us to be like him. He had a dear Son Jesus Christ, who came into the world to bear the punishment due to us for our sins ; and oh, my mother, if we believe in him, when we die we shall go to live with him for ever in heaven.”

“ What nonsense is that you are talking ? We all know that we are sinners, and to expiate the sins we have committed in this life, we must pass through several births, either as human beings or as animals, until we have performed good deeds enough to outweigh our evil deeds.”

“Nay, nay, my mother, God’s Son came into the world, and died a cruel death, as an atonement for all our sins; and if we only believe in him, there will be no future punishment for us, but only everlasting happiness.”

“Oh, this is a dreadful dream that my son should talk thus, that you should think or wish to leave us or desert us! Who was it loved and cherished you from your earliest infancy? and now, my heart’s treasure, you are thinking to desert me! Oh, if such a thing should happen, I should die. I would drain the poison to its dregs! Oh, that such a calamity should have befallen me!” and she burst into tears, wringing her hands and moaning piteously.

Then suddenly rising, with the most furious gestures she exclaimed, “I shall curse you! Yes, my son, my heaviest curse will rest upon you, a mother’s

curse, if I ever hear another word like this?"

"Oh no, my mother, curse me not, curse me not!" he exclaimed, falling at her feet. "Bless me, bless me, my mother! It has been my earnest love to you, and the dread only of your curse, that has kept me from becoming a Christian. How can I leave all I love—how can I incur your curse! O God! O God! teach me what to do; but bless me now, my mother."

The old woman flung her arms around her son, lavishing the most endearing caresses upon him, and all those tender epithets which are used by the Orientals: "Jewel of my existence, I cannot live without you. Your love to me is as the sun to the flower—as the moon in the dark night to the traveller. Go now, my beloved one; I will pray to the gods to avert their anger from you."

Chundro left the verandah with a heart-broken look, and immediately my mother and grandmother prostrated themselves before a picture of Kali that hung in my mother's room, and with prayers and tears besought the goddess not to let her anger fall upon them, promising many gifts and offerings to assuage her wrath.*

* These gifts and offerings, after being presented to the goddess, go to the gooroo or priest; therefore they are constantly working upon the fears of these poor women, and giving instruction as to the proper way in which worship is to be performed.

CHAPTER VII.

For some days after this conversation with my uncle Chundro, my mother and grandmother were much together, praying, weeping, and talking in subdued whispers. At length, one day my grandmother came into my mother's room with a bright, smiling face, and said, "It is all right; I have done it."

"What is right? what have you done?" inquired my mother.

"Chundro's father* has business at Benares which requires some one to be there for some months. He was going himself; but I have persuaded him to

* A woman never speaks of her husband as *my husband*, but always as such a one's father; and a woman, except in her father's house, is never called by her given name. She is called Bo, which means daughter-in-law, and according to which son's wife she is, she is called Major Bo, Monar Bo, etc.

let Chundro go instead. Thus he will be away a long time from all these Christian influences, and being in that holy place, we may hope that he will soon return to the full faith in the religion of his forefathers; and should death overtake him there, which may Kali avert, even this liking for the Christians will not prevent his going to heaven.”*

My mother highly approved this plan. It was their love for him that sent this young man from his home, for they fully believed that no more fearful calamity could befall him, than to become a Christian.

I went up quietly to my grandmother, and said, “And Berash, grandmother, will she go too with my uncle Chundro, or will she be sent away?”

* Benares is considered such a holy place that, no matter how wicked the person is who dies there, even the beef-eating Christian, the vilest of all, goes directly to heaven.

“ No, child, no, you will not lose your little playfellow ; Berash will remain here.”

I must tell you who Berash was. I suppose you do not know a very strange and bad custom we have here in India. When a little girl is ten years old, often younger, her father looks about among his acquaintance to see who has a son that is not married ; generally a young man of eighteen or twenty, sometimes it may be an old man of sixty, or even seventy. When he finds one he would like for a son-in-law, he sends a message to the boy's father, proposing the marriage. If the father likes the family, he consents to the meeting, and they talk the matter over together ; and if they can agree together about the money and presents to be given to the children, the match is decided upon without the boy and girl even seeing

each other, or having one word to say on the subject. They are never consulted in the matter. The presents are exchanged, and in two or three weeks the marriage ceremony takes place. The little bride remains for a week at her father's house, where great feasting goes on. She then goes to her mother-in-law's house to make her a visit for a few weeks or months.*

From the day of her marriage, her mother-in-law has the control of her actions much more than her mother, and she continually insists on her making visits to her, of longer or shorter duration, according to her pleasure. These visits are exceedingly irksome to the poor child. Instead of enjoying the uncontrolled liberty and license of a fond mother, she goes among a number of strange women,

* It is not said she goes to her husband's, but to her mother-in-law's house ; but she does not go to live there until three or four years after her marriage.

none of whom she has ever seen before. She is made to assist in the cooking, and to learn to prepare those curries and sweetmeats of which her husband is especially fond, being constantly scolded for her awkwardness. In her mother-in-law's presence she must always keep her veil, or chuddah, drawn over her face; she must not speak above a whisper, or sit down unless she expressly commands her. In these visits she rarely sees her husband, and therefore feels utterly desolate and alone.

Now Berash had been married a few months previous to my uncle Chundro, and she was at our house on a long visit. She was a dear little thing, very pretty and gentle. I loved her very much, and we were continually together; though whenever she saw Uncle Chundro coming, she would run away and hide herself in my grandmother's room. She

had really never seen him; for when he came near, she drew her veil tightly over her face; and though they had been married some months, she had scarcely spoken to him. It was decided by my grandmother that Berash should remain at our house during my uncle's absence. I was glad of this, for I did not want to lose both my uncle and play-fellow too.

A few days after this, my uncle Chundro came to bid us good-by. He was in good spirits, hoping to do well in the business which he was about to start. He begged my mother to be good and kind to Berash; and taking me in his arms, held me tightly for an instant, then putting me down, he said, "God bless my little Kardoo," and turning away, he was gone. I little thought that would be the last time I should ever see him.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABOUT a week after my uncle Chundro went away, one of my little cousins, who lived in our house, was married, and as I shall soon have to tell you of my own marriage, perhaps you would like to know how the ceremony is performed. I can better tell you this when another was the principal actor, than when I was myself the bride, as then, I was so frightened I hardly knew what was done.

Mohenee, my cousin, was about a year older than myself. Two weeks after the Kali poojah, my uncle came in and told my aunt that he had made arrangements for Mohenee to be married, and that she must get every thing ready for the wedding in two weeks. Oh, what a scene of bustle and preparation there was in the

house. What varieties of sweetmeats and curries had to be made ; what exchanging of presents, fruits, sweetmeats, etc., daily ;* while Mohence, poor child, was in a great state of fever and excitement.

Many thousand rupces' worth of jewels were bought by her father and given to her, these forming her wedding dower.† During these two weeks the little bride was constantly bathed in perfumed water, her feet and hands dyed each day afresh with henna, and the last four days she was obliged to sit holding in her hand a little instrument with which to blacken her eyelids and lashes. This is in shape like a teaspoon with a cover. The rea-

* Sometimes a wedding costs such immense sums of money, that the family are impoverished by it for years.

† When the bride goes to live at her husband's house, her mother-in-law takes possession of these, and she is never allowed to wear them except by her permission, and then only such as she chooses to let her have.

son of this custom, as of many others, I never could learn. All that any one could tell, was, "It is our custom."

I hope I shall not weary you with the many descriptions of our customs, but I want you to see the difference between our manners and yours, that you may the better feel the reason you have to be grateful that you were born in a Christian land.

Towards the evening of her wedding-day, Mohence was bathed in rosewater, her feet and hands dyed afresh. She was dressed in a red silk sarree embroidered with gold, with a golden border. On her head was an elegant ornament of gold, most richly wrought and set with jewels; a fringe of gold and pearls hanging over her forehead. This is placed just where the hair meets the forehead, and passes round to the back of the head, while from the centre

of the forehead another band exactly similar passes across the parting, and joins the back hair. The ears were pierced in six places, and loaded down with earrings of the most exquisite workmanship; some of them were so long they touched the neck, while the hoops of others were three inches in diameter. A necklace of pearls clasped her throat, and below this, around her neck, were a dozen chains, each longer than the upper one, and of different workmanship. Both arms were covered with armlets and bracelets, excepting just at the bend of the elbow. Passing four times around her loins was a very heavy gold chain, fastened by a massive gold buckle set with precious stones.

She had as many as a dozen silver bangles on each leg, some falling over the foot as far as the toes, these being very wide, and edged with a fringe of

small silver bells that made a soft tinkling noise, like little bells, as she moved. If poor Mohenee had been obliged to walk, the weight of the jewels would have been dreadful. Our poor people have never learned those beautiful words of the apostle Paul to woman, that they adorn themselves "not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." They know nothing of the beauty of holiness.

As soon as I had seen Mohenee dressed, I ran away into the verandah behind the gods' house, that I might see all I could of the ceremony. As I had never witnessed a wedding before, I was anxious to see all. At this time there was no image of any god in the gods' house, but a great part of the ceremony was performed there. When I first looked down, the two fathers were sitting there with the gooroos of each family. These goo-

roos were going through a set form, very tedious, which generally occupies an hour or two, telling the fathers-in-law what was their duty, and making all necessary settlements and promises. In the meantime the babus of the house went about among the guests, sprinkling them with rosewater from a little silver vase, and some of the boys presented to each guest a bouquet of flowers, and threw a small wreath of white flowers around each person's neck. Again, a small silver box was passed among the higher class of guests, filled with exquisite perfume; into this each one dipped his fingers. Of course the Brahmins are first served with every thing.

While this was going on, I heard a loud shout :

“The bridegroom comes!” and then five or six little girls of the house (I was thought too old to join in this, as they

must not be over six years old) with lighted torches, ran through the court out into the street, and brought in the bridegroom. He was led in, and seated on a handsome carpet, which had been placed for him in the middle of the court. He was dressed in a sarree of dark purple silk; on his head a high conical cap, like a mitre, made of white silk and tinsel. Here he remained sitting for about half an hour; one of the gooroos spoke to him, and then he went out through another passage under the house to the women's court. I ran out quickly to see what was going on.

Down in the court were a number of our women with their chuddahs drawn closely over their faces, and most of the little children were standing there also. The bridegroom was standing in the middle of the court, motionless as a statue; and on the ground nearly in front of him

stood a small pan of flaming coals. Near his side was the barber, blowing a trumpet at intervals.*

The barber continued blowing on his horn for five minutes. Then five women appeared, all closely veiled, each having on her head a sort of tray made of wicker-work. The first one was the bride's mother, who wore a handsome silk sarree. In the tray on her head she carried red hot or blazing coals, something being placed between the tray and the coals to prevent them burning through. She also carried in her hand a chattee† of water. The other women had each various kinds of fruit in their trays.

They passed around the bridegroom seven times, the mother spilling the water so as to form a circle around him. At the seventh time, when she was be-

* The barber or barberess, by the way, is master of ceremonies, as he or she generally forms the match.

† A vessel for carrying water.

hind the groom, she suddenly threw the tray of burning coals on his head, they falling at his feet in front. She then turned the tray wrong side up, and stood upon it. With her hands closed together she touched his forehead, lips, and chin with oil, plantain, salt, etc. She moved away, and then the little bride appeared for the first time.

Mohenee was seated on a board, on which a variety of figures were chalked, and was carried by the barber and his assistant six times around the groom, within the circle marked by the water. She was then placed at his feet, still sitting on the board. He had not moved a muscle.

At this time her sarree was not drawn over her face, but she held it down so that he could not see her at all. The barber and his assistant now lifted the bride to a level with the groom's face ;

a large sheet was brought and held over the heads of all, the bride's mother and one of the 'aunts standing under the sheet. They held lights close up to the pair, who were supposed now to look at each other for the first time. The bridegroom did not look at his bride, however, that I could see, and poor little Mohenee kept her face buried in her hands. They remained in this position about five minutes; during this time the barber would vary his performance of blowing the horn by occasionally uttering a wild shriek. This was imprecating curses on whoever should presume to say any thing evil of the young couple.

The sheet was now removed, and the groom passed through the passage again into the gods' house; Mohenee was carried after him. Here they were seated opposite each other on a circle elabo-

rately chalked on the floor. Between them there was a choice vase filled with flowers, on which the back of the groom's hand was placed; while the back of the bride's hand was placed in his. Wreaths of flowers were then bound around their hands, and ten rupees placed on the top. These were for the priests.

The gooroo of each family now laid down the law most emphatically to the opposite father-in-law. Not one word was said to either of the parties themselves.* Then Mohenee's father and one of the priests seated themselves in front of the couple. By the father was a large silver dish filled with Ganges water; in this a beautiful ruby ring and a thin iron bracelet were placed. The ring was given to the groom and the bracelet to the bride; then some of the water was

* In case either father is dead, the nearest male relative takes his place.

sprinkled upon them, and some of the flowers thrown at them. Mohenee was lifted up, carried first to his right side, then to his left. Here a corner of their sarrees was tied together; this pronounced them man and wife.

The groom then stood up; Mohenee was placed standing in front of him, with her back towards him, and his arms were put around her. A plate was placed in her hand with some rice and plantains, and a wisp of straw was lighted and placed flaming at her feet. She was seated again at his side, some red powder was put upon her hair at the front parting, and the chuddah drawn over her head.*

The ceremony was now ended; the groom went among the babus, and the

* Until she is married, a girl does not wear the chuddah over her head; that and the red powder which is put on fresh every day is a sign she is married. A widow never wears the powder.

little bride came back to us. The whole night was spent in feasting, watching the dancing girls, etc. The feasting was kept up for several days. Then Mohe-nee went for two or three weeks to visit her mother-in-law.

Such were our marriage ceremonies. How different from the simplicity of a Christian wedding, where the blessing of God is invoked on loving hearts. I could never find out any reason for all these ceremonies, except the lighting of the wisp of straw. The bridegroom is supposed to promise by this, that however poor he may become, he will at least find as much as a wisp of straw with which to burn or scorch his wife's face at her death.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER my cousin Mohencee's marriage, every thing went on in its usual course for two or three months ; when one day, as I was sitting on my mother's lap listening to one of her marvellous stories about the gods, we were startled by the most piercing shrieks proceeding from my grandmother's room ; and in a minute she appeared, tearing her hair, uttering the wildest cries of lamentation, and exclaiming : " Oh, my son, my son ! " She flung herself on the floor, grovelling in the dust.

It was a long time before any of us could get an account of her anguish. We could only tell that something had happened to one of her sons. All of her

daughters-in-law were standing round her in extreme anxiety, each one dreading to hear some ill news of her own husband; for bad as a husband may be, a widow's fate is more to be dreaded than any other in India. At length my mother, who was a great favorite with her, succeeded in drawing from her the cause of her grief.

Her story was very broken, being continually interrupted by shrieks and wails of grief; in which, as she proceeded, she was joined by all the other women present.

Her account was briefly this. My uncle Chundro had settled in Benares, and was carrying on successfully the business his father had intrusted to him, when one evening he left his place of business to return to his house, with a considerable sum of money about him. He never reached his home; for the next

morning his body was found in the road. He had been strangled and robbed.

The neighborhood where his body was found had long had the reputation of being a noted haunt of Thugs. It was a piece of jungle, or land covered with brushwood and low, stunted trees. My uncle had been warned never to pass by there alone after dark; but he was a brave, courageous young man, and believed that most of the stories he had heard of that place were untrue; so he paid for his daring with his life. This was, as you may suppose, a very sad tale for us to hear, and heart-rending was the grief that accompanied the telling. The only thing that could in the least mitigate the anguish was, that it had taken place in Benares; therefore the soul of the departed had gone to live with the gods; but the last sad rites had been performed for him by strangers.

Before I go on with my story, I must stop to tell you who and what are the Thugs. They are a sect of men in India devoted to the worship or service of Kali. Now you must remember that Kali is the goddess of vengeance; that she hates all mankind, and takes delight in their misery and death; consequently, continual sacrifices are offered to her, to avert evil from the heads of those who are supposed to have fallen under her displeasure. But the sacrifices she likes best are human sacrifices. For this reason the Thugs are continually seeking new victims to offer to her. They are a sort of secret brotherhood, known to each other, but to no one else; because were they known, they would be both feared and hated. A man may be a Thug, and his nearest friend not know it; but the father teaches the sons, so that Thugism descends in families.

A Thug being once caught and sentenced to death for his crime, acknowledged that he had put to death between forty and fifty. On being asked if he did not feel sorry or grieved for what he had done, he declared he did not; why should he? His father was a Thug; he was born a Thug; it was the business to which he was born; how could he help himself. In India, a son always follows the same calling as his father.

If a Hindoo is known to say a word disrespectful of any of the gods, that man is immediately marked out for destruction; and he is watched and followed, until some convenient time arrives to despatch him. The victim is always strangled; the instrument of death being ever at hand. The long cloth worn by the natives of India can in an instant be stripped off the person, and wound around the neck of the vic-

tim. They become so expert in this, that no cry can ever escape the lips. All that is known is, that the frightful-looking corpse is found lying on its back, with distended eyes, protruding tongue, and clenched hands. As every corpse that has been destroyed by the Thugs is found in precisely the same attitude, with its tongue and eyes resembling somewhat the pictures of Kali, they are instantly known as victims dedicated to her. Therefore these poor infatuated idolaters never seek to find the murderers and bring them to punishment; fearing if they did so, a terrible vengeance from Kali. Rich persons, or those carrying money about them, are thus continually murdered, as whatever property the victim has about him belonged by right to the self-constituted priest of Kali.

Now Benares, though the most holy

city, was also the most noted resort of these Thugs; for one reason—rich persons were constantly coming there to offer gifts at the temples. But the principal reason was this: to kill a Brahmin was a crime which nothing could expiate. A Thug might, and frequently did, kill a Brahmin by mistake; but if he lived and died in the holy city, he need not trouble himself whether his victims were Brahmins or not, as even the crime of killing fifty Brahmins would not prevent his going to heaven.

Such I say *was* Thugism; for since the English rule in India, these murderers have been hunted down, though their crimes were of frequent occurrence at the time of which I am writing.

The day after we heard of the death of my uncle was spent by all the females of our family in weeping, fasting, and prayers. Vows, mingled with imprecations on

Kali, were continually pouring from the lips of some, while a goat, with some rice, fruits, etc., was sent to the gooroo, for him to offer in the temple of Kali, of which there were several in the city.

Then began the sufferings of my poor little friend Berash. My grandmother immediately declared that henceforth she was never to return to her father's house, but remain with us to live out her widowhood. She was just eleven years old. My grandmother continually lamented that on account of her son's dying so far away from home, the proper respect could not be paid to him at his funeral, of having his wife burned with him. As Berash could not suffer death with her husband, my grandmother considered it an incumbent duty, in honor of his memory, to make the poor child's life one of suffering, by exacting most

rigorously all the penalties and inflictions imposed upon widows.

Every girl, or wife, wears at least one gold necklace, with a bracelet on each arm; but from the moment she becomes a widow, she is never permitted the slightest ornament. She is stripped of her jewelry. The henna is carefully removed from her feet and finger-nails; she is clothed in a sarree of very coarse cloth, without a border such as is generally worn by the women. She must never sleep again on a bedstead, but must always lie on a mat on the floor. She must never sit down in the presence of her mother-in-law or elder sisters-in-law, unless they expressly command her to do so. She must do all the commonest, meanest drudgery in the house, and never eat until every one else has finished, and then very sparingly, and of the poorest food. But

worse than all, besides many occasional fasts, she is compelled to fast two whole days in each week, not a drop of water being allowed to pass her lips, even if she is dying; and the sufferings from thirst in this hot climate are dreadful.

If a woman's husband dies worth ever so much money, she has no benefit of it. His eldest male relative becomes her guardian, and he doles out to her just enough for a bare subsistence, and the rest all goes to her husband's male relations. If she has children, the same person is their guardian; and he gives what he sees fit for their education, support, marriage, etc. Such is the unhappy lot of a poor widow in our country. Oh, how different from the commands of the Christian's God with regard to the "widow and the fatherless!"

My dear little Berash was a very delicate child—very gentle and timid. She

submitted without a murmur or complaint to all that my grandmother commanded ; but the rigorous course of treatment which she endured was too much for her tender frame, and a few short months ended her career on earth. During the last few months of her life, she became so enfeebled that she could do nothing but lie on the mat.

The whole time that she was ill, no one came near, to give her food or speak a kind word to her, except my dear mother and myself. If she was too weak any day to crawl to the place where her food was placed, she had to go without it until one of us brought it for her. She was a widow ; and according to the women's superstitions, if they showed pity or compassion for her, the like calamity would befall them. But my beloved mother, though she believed more truly in all their superstitions than

the rest did, yet would not be prevented, by the fear of dreadful misfortune to herself, from doing all she could to relieve the poor little sufferer.

The day before she died, Berash called me to come and lie down on the mat beside her. She was lying out on the verandah, and had for some time been shading her eyes with her hands, and looking up into the sky. “Kardoo, tell me again what your uncle* told you about that beautiful place up there, and the good God who lives there. You said your uncle told you he was not like Kali, who hates us, but that he loves us like a father. Oh, how I want somebody to love me. Your dear mother speaks kindly to me, and looks sorry for me, but I want somebody to love me like my own dear mother.”

* No woman ever uses the given name of her husband ; and if she meets with it in reading, she will not speak it aloud.

“I love you, Berash,” I said.

She put her poor little thin arms about me, and put her cheek to mine. “Yes, I know you do,” she said, “and I love you; but I want some one who is strong to love me, who is very strong, I feel so weak and helpless. I know I am going away from this world very soon, and oh, it makes me so frightened to think of what they tell me—that because I was not burned with your uncle, as soon as I leave this body I shall become some ugly animal. I could not help his dying when he was away, and if he had been here I know not what I should have done, for oh, it must be so dreadful to be burned! But tell me again about that God who lives up there.”

I told her again, as I had done several times, all that my uncle Chundro had told me: that the God who lives in

heaven loves us, and always likes to see us happy ; that we were all sinful, and often did things that God did not like ; but that God had a Son—I could not tell his name—who loved us very much ; that he had done something—I could not tell what it was—that had pleased the great God ; and that now, if we asked God to forgive us the naughty things we had done, he would forgive us for that Son's sake ; and then, when we die, instead of being changed into some animal, we should go up to live above the sky ; and oh, he said that was such a beautiful place, and if anybody went there they would never be sick any more, nor hungry, nor thirsty, and this Son of God would love them and take care of them.

“ Oh, I should like it so much, Kardoo. I have prayed to that God ever since you told me about him. I pray to

him every day that, because his Son was good, he would love me, and let me go to live in that beautiful place."

"But, Berash, I do not know that it is true. Uncle Chundro said it was, but mother said it was not true; but then I think my uncle must know best, because he knew so much more than my mother."

"Well, Kardoo, my mother used to say that there were a great many gods, so many that one person could not remember them all, and that they very often quarrelled and were angry with each other; and then, if anybody offended one of these gods, the other was pleased with him, and would reward him. Now Kali is angry with me, and the Tuckoo-Ma* tells me that she will never forgive me, and that, after I have been born into the world many times, if I ever get to heaven, it will be because

* Grandmother, female head of the house.

some other god has helped me. I have thought about this a great many times. For many weeks I have been too weak to go to pay poojah to Sheve, and you told me that your unele Chundro called this god the great God, and said that we might pray to him at any time, or in any place, and he would hear us. Oh, I do hope he is a greater God than Kali, then perhaps he can help me. I ask him every day to help me, because of what his Son did. I wish I knew what that was."

She lay for a long time perfectly exhausted, a burning spot in each cheek, her eyes bright and her lips parched. At length she turned to me, imploring me to give her a few drops of water from the lota in my mother's room. "I know it is very wicked to do it to-day; but oh, I suffer so much, and, Kardoo, I have several times crawled to your mother's

room and taken some water when you were all away. I knew it was very wicked to do it on these fast days ; but I could not help it, and I prayed directly to the great God, who, you said, does not like to see us in pain, to forgive me Oh, give me some now !”

At first I refused ; I did not dare. I knew my grandmother would punish me most severely if I were caught giving her any ; but at length I thought of an expedient to alleviate her sufferings, and yet not run the risk of being caught. I ran to the lota and dipped the corner of my sarree into the water, then returned and squeezed the drops of water into her mouth. This I repeated several times, till her thirst was somewhat relieved. She then put her little arms around my neck. and whispered, “I think I shall go to sleep now ; but, Kardoo, if the great God hears me, and lets

me go to that beautiful place, then I will ask him to let you come there to."

I left her for a time. Before going to bed I went to her again, and she was sleeping. The next morning when I awoke, I found they were just preparing to take Berash away to the burning ghat.* She had passed away in the night; how, or when, no one knew. She was found cold and stiff. She was so small and emaciated by sickness, that a bier was not needed to carry her. A bier is a coarse frame of wood with rope woven across it, on which the bodies of adults are carried to the burning ghat, where a pile of wood is erected; the body laid upon it; more wood is piled upon that; the pile is kindled, and the body left to be consumed. In cases of

* The burning ghat is a large enclosed space on the banks of the Ganges, where the dead bodies are burned, and the ashes cast into the river. If they are only partially consumed, the remains are then cast into the river.

the poorer class, or of young girls, this expense is rarely incurred, it being then considered sufficient just to light a large wisp of straw, blacken the face with it, and then cast the body into the Ganges.

The little body of Berash was thrown over the shoulder of a servant, covered with a cloth, and carried to the burning ghat. Then she was laid on the ground, while the servant went to buy a small bundle of straw. This he lighted and blackened her face with it; and then the poor little body was flung into the Ganges, to be eaten by a shark or alligator. I doubt not that her liberated spirit was carried by angels into the presence of her Redeemer.

Since I have become a Christian and learned to know somewhat of the love of God in Christ, I feel a strong hope of meeting that little one hereafter in "the the kingdom of God's dear Son." Did

any ever come to Him, in however feeble or impotent a manner, and were cast out.

Oh, how I mourned and wept for my little friend! My mother shed a few tears; but her name was not mentioned, nor did her death seem to be more thought of than that of a dog.

Dear readers, you can little know how a false religion hardens the heart, and deadens it to all the holiest feelings of humanity.

CHAPTER X.

It was thought, now that my unele Chundro, who had slighted the goddess, and his little wife were both dead, her vengeance would be appeased for a time ; but fresh troubles were in store for us. My brother Prosonno was stricken down with a most alarming sickness. He was my mother's idol ; the fondest, deepest devotion of her heart was lavished upon him, her first-born, her son.* My mother had lost three little ones, who had only seen the light before they were taken from the evil to come ; and now he, her pride, her joy, lay for days hovering between life and death. Her grief and anguish were unutterable. She felt

* Ask Hindoo parents how many children they have, and they will answer, One child and three girls. Girls are regarded with perfect contempt, in comparison with boys.

that now the wrath of Kali was being poured upon her head, for ever having heard the disparaging words spoken by my uncle Chundro. She vowed many gifts and sacrifices to Kali, if her boy was only spared.

At length, in the extremity of her grief, she made a solemn vow, that if her Prosonno was spared to her, and if she had another son, she would sacrifice him to Kali. My father was present, heard and approved the vow; and as from that time Prosonno began to get better, it was supposed that the goddess had heard and accepted the vow.

During my brother's illness I saw more of my father than I had done for years, all the spare time he could get being passed in nursing and attending my brother, which he did with a woman's tenderness and patience, sitting beside him for hours, bathing his brow,

fanning, and rubbing his weared limbs; for was he not his son, his pride, his glory, his only child!

Much to the surprise of all, Prosonno recovered, and about five months after, my little brother Luckie was born, a beautiful, bright, healthy little fellow.

But now who can describe the hourly pain that wrung my mother's heart? Formerly she had worn a cheerful, happy look, with a smile of welcome to me when I entered her presence. Now she never smiled. She would hold her little one in her arms, with her eyes riveted on its form, the slow tears coursing down her cheeks; and if any one hastily entered the room, she would clasp her babe to her breast, as if she expected it to be torn from her arms.

My father never took any notice of the babe; never nursed or caressed it, as all fathers do their infant children

here, particularly their boys. And when his eyes fell upon it, he would turn away with a stern, angry look, which I could not then understand ; for at that time I knew nothing of the vow, and therefore was not aware that he was trying to steel his heart against his child. My father was a bigoted Hindoo ; the laws, customs, and religion of his forefathers must be most strictly observed, though it should cost him all that was dear on earth, even his life.

I could not understand how it was, that when other mothers looked with delight upon their smiling infants, my mother's look upon her babe, who I thought more beautiful than any I had ever seen, should be only one of grief. It was my constant delight to help her tend this child ; to no other arms but mine was he ever intrusted, and never would she for an instant trust him out

of her sight. When she was cooking, I would be beside her, with the dear little fellow ever in view.

When our little Luckie was six months old, my mother received a visit from the gooroo, accompanied by my father. It was then I heard for the first time of the vow concerning my little brother, and that my mother with her own hands was to cast him into the Ganges. The old Brahmin had come now to insist upon the performance of the vow, threatening Kali's direct vengeance if it was not performed. My father upholding the gooroo, my mother in a wild burst of anguish, flung herself at the gooroo's feet, clasping them in her hands, kissing the ground, and imploring in heart-rending accents for a little delay. She would keep her vow, she would give her child as she had promised, but oh, let her keep him a little while longer until she

could wean her heart from him ; she would do it, only give her a little time. She was not well, not strong enough to take the journey now ; as soon as she was quite well she would do it. Her anguish would have touched the hardest heart.

My father was moved by her entreaties, and besought the gooroo to offer a goat now, and he would promise in a few weeks, when my mother was stronger, the vow should be accomplished. The old priest went away very much displeased, muttering that we might expect more trouble if we thus treated the sacred gods.

From that time I could fully join in my mother's feeling for the little darling ; and as day after day passed, how precious did he become in my eyes. And then a feeling of great horror crept over me, as I thought perhaps all this

trouble had come upon us on my account; for had I not helped Berash to pray to the great God against Kali! Oh, dear friends, thank God that you were brought up in the Christian faith, to know, not a God of hate, but a God of love: "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness."

For nearly three months longer we kept our little treasure, my mother still continuing very weak, and struggling with a constant, slow fever, brought on, I believe, by excitement. Then my father was taken down with cholera; he got over it, but for several days after he was very low; at length he recovered. My mother then told me that she was going to accompany my father on a pilgrimage to a mela; they would be gone for a week or two, and of course must take the baby with them.

The melas are certain religious festivals held at holy spots on the banks of the Ganges at stated seasons of the year. To attend them and worship for some days, is considered a great and meritorious act of religion, and thither multitudes of every class resort. Women of the highest caste, who all the rest of their lives are kept in the strictest seclusion, may attend them. A number of tents are pitched here, as the mela lasts for several weeks, and the richer portion of the pilgrims use these tents. Here also are collected a number of the holy jogees, or fakirs, of whom I shall tell you more hereafter, and an innumerable company of peddlers of every description, to sell their wares.

My mother told me that my father was going to perform this pilgrimage out of thankfulness to the gods for his recovery, and he wished her to go with him.

I begged to be allowed to go, but was instantly told I could not.

My heart sank within me directly. I feared, but dared not express my fears, that Luckie, my darling, was to be sacrificed. Since the first day my father was taken ill, my mother was so altered. I had not once seen her kiss or embrace her darling. No tear was in her eye when she looked at him. She only took him in her arms to feed him. There was something about her I could not understand. She seemed petrified to stone. Her every movement seemed as though it were, by some means, independent of her will.

During my father's illness, thus the babe became my especial charge, and oh, how every chord of my heart was wound around that little one. At length the day came when they were to start on their pilgrimage. My mother and

her babe went in one palky, and a maid-servant in another. I cannot tell you what I felt when I bade my little darling a last good-by, as I felt sure it would be.

Perhaps you will think that I am expressing feelings too strong for a child; but remember that in India girls are women, and often mothers, at the age of twelve. Then remember too, that we have no dolls to love or care for or think about. When we do love, we love intensely.

CHAPTER XI.

IN about ten days my father and mother returned, and, as I had feared, without the baby. To all my questions, tears, entreaties, or endearments, my mother returned no answer, still preserving the same frigid appearance and manner. It seemed as if her heart had really been turned to stone. I never again received from her any of those caresses she had been wont to lavish upon me. The servant who went with my mother did not return for a week after. From her I obtained an account of the sacrifice of my brother. My father intended to remain five days at the mela. During these days he and my mother were continually performing religious rites. On the evening of the

fifth, my brother was to be devoted to the goddess, and then they were immediately to return home. I will give you the servant's account of that day.

“The previous evening, your mother took the baby from my arms and lulled him to sleep. She then sat gazing at him, without moving a finger, for at least an hour. The gooroo had told her it would impair the benefit of the sacrifice if she wept or mourned. At the end of that time she quickly arose, and placed the child in my arms without a word. He slept with me. The next day when he awoke, she told me to feed him, but she never looked at him.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, while he was sleeping in my arms, she came and took him from me, easting part of her ehuddah over the infant's face. She bade me follow. She walked quickly down to the river's brink, and without

pausing an instant, flung her babe from her as far as she could into the water. He sunk, rose again instantly, and as instantly the immense head and open jaws of an alligator appeared beside him; the next moment the headless trunk of the babe floated before us, dyeing the water with its blood. Your mother uttered a wild cry, and would have flung herself after the child, had I not held her back. In a few moments she fell to the earth in strong convulsions. I called some men, who assisted me to carry her to her tent. For two or three days she was very ill. On recovering, she told me on no account to mention her babe to her again; and if you love your mother, you will not, Kardoo."

I did love my mother, and I thank God who enabled me from that hour to determine that I would nevermore be disobedient to her, as I had some-

times been, but would try by every means I could to make up for the little one she had lost. Never after but once did I hear her allude to the child. She was talking to me of our duty to the gods, and I was expressing strong repugnance to what was required of us. A shiver passed over her frame ; and laying her hand solemnly on my head, "Oh, my child, my child, speak not so ! If we rebel against the gods, or think hard thoughts of them, they will punish us until we repent, ay, taking from us our very heart's blood. And why should they not ? They are all-powerful, they made us, they give us all that we have, and we must do what they wish us."

You will think, my dear young friends, that I am telling you a very sad story, and indeed I am, for "The dark places of the earth are full of the abodes of cruelty."

My mother from this time never recovered her cheerfulness ; she never told me any more of the stories I loved to listen to. She was quiet and gentle, but never spoke unless she was obliged to. You will ask me if I had no pleasure, no enjoyment in my life ? Such as I have told you of, at the poojahs, or at weddings, when we had plenty of sweetmeats to eat, and could look down through our screen at what was going on.

When I was about eleven years old, my father came to my mother's room one day, and told her she must make arrangements speedily for my marriage. He had just betrothed me to the son of an old Koolenee Brahmin, and he was much pleased, and wished the marriage to take place very soon.

A Koolenee is the highest caste among Brahmins, and it is considered a great honor to be in any way allied to them.

They are frequently very poor, but usually marry the daughters of rich babus, the honor on one side being considered equivalent to the wealth on the other side. These Koolenees are also privileged to marry as many wives as they please. It is seldom that other Hindoos marry a second wife during the lifetime of the first, except where the first wife is childless, though they generally marry again a few days after her death. But as soon as the money brought by the first wife is expended, the Koolenee marries another, and so on, until he may have fifty wives. He may live with each one, when and as long as he pleases, or he may never see her again from the time he marries and gets her money; but if he dies, every one of these poor girls is a widow, and has to undergo the widow's penalties. There is one custom, however, which is

favorable for the wife of a Koolenee. Except a few short, occasional visits to the mother-in-law's house, she lives at her father's, even while her husband lives with her. In her father's house she is subject to fewer restrictions, and can constantly see and associate with her own brothers; and oftentimes a very warm love springs up between brothers and sisters.

As I have already told you about our marriage ceremonies, I shall not describe mine. When I was lifted up to look at my husband, I trembled so violently that I did not dare to look in his face. I could only see that he was a very tall man, while I was a very little girl, very small for my age.

After the ceremony was over, I was taken to my mother-in-law's house for three weeks. Oh, what a trial that was to me! I, who had always worn my

sarree loosely over my shoulders, was obliged to have it drawn completely over my head and face, so that it could not be seen, and I could scarcely see through the muslin; and instead of running in and out of my mother's room, and talking freely to her, as I had been used, I could not move or speak without the permission of my mother-in-law, who was a cross, ugly old woman, in whose presence I might not sit down, or remove my veil, or speak above the slightest whisper. This restraint was most irksome to me. However, it was of short duration, and I never but once afterwards visited my husband's family.

Every thing passed on quietly in the house for nearly two years, my husband staying occasionally for weeks together at our house; then he came to live there altogether. He was kind and gentle, and when I could overcome my fear of

him, I began in some degree to like him. But oh, how different from the love of husband and wife in a Christian land, where the wife is the chosen companion, friend, comforter, and sharer of the husband's joys and sorrows. I knew nothing of my husband's companions or employments, except through the barberess, who, being a woman of low caste, could go about everywhere and pick up all the gossip, to retail it in the family where she visited.

CHAPTER XII.

AND now I am coming to the saddest part of my story. I almost hesitate to tell it, for fear you will think I am stating that which is not true. Alas, it is only too true ! We heard through the barberess that my father had had a great quarrel with an old friend of his. They had been close friends from their childhood, but now Babu Gopal had become my father's bitter enemy. In some business transaction he thought my father had overreached him, and he had taken an oath to be revenged on him. Now I must relate the circumstances as they took place, not as they came to my knowledge.

Babu Gopal had determined on a plan

of fiendish revenge ; while at the same time he wrote to my father, begging him by their old friendship to let the quarrel be forgotten, and to make friends again. My father consented, and again they exchanged visits.

Now that you may understand what follows, you must know that for a Bengali woman of good caste to be seen by any man except the gooroo, or servants, even by her own father-in-law or brother-in-law, would be not only a great disgrace to herself, but it would bring shame on the whole family, especially her husband. It is considered an insult for one babu to ask after the health of another man's wife ; it is pollution even to take her name upon his lips ; such disgrace can only be wiped out by death. I must also tell you that the dancing-girls who exhibit at the poojahs and feasts are always the lowest and most

abandoned characters. You will now understand what I am about to relate.

On a certain day Babu Gopal sent a note to my father, saying he intended to have a grand tomasha at his house that evening, begging him to come by six o'clock, and he would show him a beautiful dancing-girl who had come from the country, and they would have time to see and talk with her before the tomasha began. My father consented to go.

In the mean time Gopal sent to our family gooroo ; asked for the loan of his palky and bearers, which being granted, he immediately despatched them to my father's house, with a message to my mother, supposed to come from the gooroo, that she should repair to his house. My mother was feeling particularly unwell that day, therefore disinclined to go ; but as she stood in great fear of the old Brahmin, she felt obliged

to. I braided her hair, fastened on her jewels, and when she was quite prepared I looked at her, thinking how handsome she was, though so quiet and still.

How shall I go on? My heart utterly fails me in the attempt to record what follows. Of course, neither my mother nor the rest of the household had the least suspicion of foul play, or that she was going anywhere but to the gooroo's house. The thick red cloth was covered over the palky; she was lifted up and carried away. Alas, my mother! But I must relate the story without yielding to bursts of grief.

My mother was carried along for some distance. At last the palky was set down, the covering removed, and the doors slid back. My mother supposing she was in the apartment of the gooroo to which she had previously been taken, stepped out, and expecting to see only

the gooroo's wife, her ehuddah was not drawn over her face.

She immediately perceived that there were three or four other babus in the room, who had been invited, as my father had been, to see the pretty dancing girl. And that my father's disgrace might be the more complete, she felt a man's hand laid on her shoulder, and heard a mocking voice call my father's name, and say, "See, here is the pretty dancing-girl I promised to show you."

My mother turned in utter bewilderment and saw my father. With a cry for help she rushed towards him. He very quietly lifted her in his arms, replaced her in the palky, ordering the bearers to return with her to his house. Then turning to Babu Gopal, in a very dignified manner he thanked him for his hospitality and the enjoyment he had

received, wished the other babus good evening, without the least appearance of being discomposed, and departed.

In the meantime my mother arrived at home in a state of great fear and alarm, and terribly excited at the grievous insult that had been put upon her. She well knew that though perfectly innocent, she had been used as the means of bringing foul disgrace upon my father and his family. She sat cowering in the corner of the room, trembling in every limb, and good cause had she for fear. I remained, trying to soothe her.

At length my father's voice was heard in the verandah. My mother rose and went to meet him as he entered the room; but ere she could utter one word, my father with a blow of the fist struck her to the earth. He then jumped upon her body, and with both fists and feet began beating her life out of her.

I ran screaming towards her, but in an instant was struck senseless to the earth. Happily for me, I did not recover consciousness for many hours; when I did, my grandmother was sitting beside me. I had a dull, heavy pain in my head, and on putting up my hand, found it bound up with wet cloths. I started up, crying, "My mother!" but I was sternly bade to lie down again, and made to swallow the draught she presented to me. The draught was a sleeping potion, and I did not awake until the evening of the next day. My brother Prosonno was sitting beside me when I waked, fanning me. He spoke kindly, and asked if I felt better. It was some minutes before I could collect my scattered senses; then struggling into a sitting posture, and finding how weak I was, I burst into tears, begging him to take me into my mother's room.

“Your mother—our mother,” he said, and covering his face with his hands he sobbed aloud. “They did not tell you—you do not know, then, my poor sister, that she has departed.”

“Then my father killed her!” I exclaimed; and amid my deep grief I burst into the most bitter imprecations against him.

My brother laid his hand upon my mouth and stopped me; and checking with a great effort his own deep anguish, he said, “No, my sister, it was right; my mother must die; nothing else could wipe out the disgrace she was exposed to. That man had dared even to touch her. It was impossible she should live after this. Much as I love my mother, I could not wish her to live after being so polluted.” Then a fresh burst of anguish choked his voice.

I cannot dwell upon my own grief;

suffice it to say, that with my mother my every joy and happiness in life was gone, for I had no child ; and when, a few weeks later, my brother left his home to live in a different part of the country, I felt utterly alone. I was aimless, hopeless, spiritless. I lived in a sort of dream, except when the sight or thought of my father roused in my bosom feelings of bitter hate. All other feelings seemed dead.

At this time all remembrance of what my uncle Chundro had told me of the God of love was utterly forgotten. My only thought of God was of Kali, and towards her my feelings were those of fear and hate.

When I became calm enough to be told about it, I heard that my father had continued his abuse of my mother, jumping upon her prostrate form, and striking her until he was sure life was perfectly

extinct. Then four of the servants were told to bring a bier, her body was placed upon it, covered with a sheet, and my father and brother followed her to the burning ghat. Then my father bought a costly pile of wood, the poor body was laid upon it, and more wood was put over it. My brother with a torch set fire to the pile, and when the whole was thoroughly ignited, they returned home, leaving a servant to take up the ashes after the body was consumed, and cast them into the Ganges. Thus perished my beloved mother.

In India there is no coroner's inquest, no doctor's certificate, no one to examine whether the body is really dead, or how it died. It is nobody's business to make any inquiry, and the family give what account they please, of the death or disappearance of any member of it. Oh, who shall tell the deeds of darkness that

have been committed there. Pray, dear young friends, that the day may come when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God may penetrate into every one of these abodes.

CHAPTER XIII.

I NEVER heard that my father sought in any way, to punish the villain who deceived and injured him. The innocent victim was slain, the disgrace was wiped out in her blood. Her death was made known among our friends, but the manner of it was concealed. I do not know that her relations ever inquired the cause of her death. I have before said, it is forbidden to speak to a babu about the female members of his family ; indeed, had it been known how she died, all would probably have agreed in the wisdom of the act. No enemy could ever prove the crime against my father, as all traces of it were soon destroyed. No man saw the body after death, and in a short time nothing remained save a

few ashes. In cases of murder here, unless there are actual witnesses, it is impossible to bring the criminals to justice. As the body is always burned, there is no means of proving that the crime was committed.

From that time my father was a changed man. Heretofore he was calm, dignified, and gentle; now he became stern and forbidding; continually performing religious services, going often to poojahs and on pilgrimages to different places; giving large sums of money to the Brahmin priests and fakirs; thus laying up, as he thought, a store of merits. He seemed not to have the least peace or ease except when performing some one of these good works, while they were far from satisfying his conscience. He became more sullen and morose, until he was dreaded by the whole household. After my grandfa-

ther's death he became the head or guardian, whom the whole family were obliged to obey implicitly; and as he wanted to make all in the house as submissive to the exactions of the priests as he was, our only time of comfort was when he went on a pilgrimage.

About six months after my mother had departed, as her death was always thus spoken of, my grandmother let a piece of wood fall upon her toe, and inflammation set in. One of her sons was a doctor, and was attentive in doing all he could for her. But in two weeks the inflammation spread, and after much suffering, gangrene set in. My uncle the doctor declared there was no hope; she might linger in great agony for a week or two, but her recovery was a thing impossible. Upon hearing this, my father determined she should be carried to the Ganges to die.

My uncles opposed this, and they, being younger than my father, had seen more of Christianity, and had read Christian books ; were less bigoted, and began to see the evil of some of the Hindoo practices. But my father, as a strict Hindoo, thought he was attending to the welfare of her soul, in thus following the ancient custom. He therefore ordered her to be placed upon a bier similar to those on which the dead are carried, and covered with a sheet, to be taken to a small open shed on the banks of the river, close by the burning ghat. This shed is expressly built to shelter the dying, who are placed in view of the river, so that their last look may be on its holy waters. They are never brought here until they are thought to be in the last extremity of suffering ; and after coming here, they must have neither food, drink, nor medicine given to them.

If it should occur, as sometimes it does, that those who are subjected to this exposure recover, they are outcasts; for they are supposed to be so wicked that the holy gods will not receive them. Consequently, all their friends disown them; and even if they are Brahmins, they lose all caste—become beggars or outcasts.

My father was determined that my grandmother should have the benefit of dying by the holy river; therefore, in spite of the entreaties of my uncles, she was carried off while in a state of unconsciousness. Here he expected that a few hours at the utmost would terminate her existence; so he sat down to watch her, and have her carried to the burning ghat after she expired. It was the duty of the oldest son to have the funeral-pyre prepared; to lay the body on it, and to ignite it himself.

When a night and two days had passed, and still his mother lived, he hastened to end her sufferings. He descended to the river, and taking some of the sacred mud of the bed of the river, put it into her nostrils and her mouth. In a few moments she was suffocated. Thus having performed the duties of an affectionate son, the funeral-pyre was kindled, and he remained to see the ashes cast into the water ere he returned home.

A short time after this my father called me into his room—the one my grandfather had formerly occupied—and told me very quietly that henceforth I must never expect to see my husband. My father said that as I had no children, my husband made this the excuse to marry again. Hitherto my father had supported both my husband and myself, sending me a small weekly

allowance for providing food, and purchasing a new sarree for me when he thought I needed it. Therefore, as my husband had never supported me or made me his companion—and though not cross or unkind, yet never showed me as much love as he did to a dog—I received this news with perfect indifference. It was of little consequence to me whether he came or stayed away.

Alas, when will the day come when the Hindoo woman shall become the beloved friend and companion of her husband?

From this time, for about three years, we lived a quiet, monotonous life. One day passed away just like another. No pleasant Sundays, nothing to divide our time from week to week or from month to month, except at three periods of the year, when we celebrated poojahs to different gods. I heard that my husband

had married three more wives, but I never saw him.

One day, when my father had been away on one of his pilgrimages rather longer than usual, thinking he was still absent, I went into his room, and found him lying asleep on the floor. He was moaning, his chuddah had fallen off, and his back was bare. I stared with dismay on perceiving that it was dreadfully swollen and inflamed, with four gaping wounds in it, where the flesh must have been torn and lacerated. I ran quickly out of the room; met my brother on the verandah, he being on a visit at our house for a few days. I besought him to come into my room while I told him what I had seen.

“My sister, do not speak of it; my father will be very angry if you do.”

“Why? tell me what is the matter with him!”

“I will tell you; but you must not speak of it again. My father is a strange man. Most men, when they perform great religious acts, wish every one to know it; but my father cannot bear to have others allude to them; he never feels satisfied with them, knowing that we younger men, who have had intercourse with the English, think them not only foolish, but very wicked. You know he is always going on pilgrimages, or praying, or fasting. He feels that he, or some of our family, have done very wicked things; that the anger of the gods is continually shown towards them; therefore he is trying by every means to appease their fury. Feeling that in former days he has been a great sinner, he is trying now to make compensation, but never thinks he has done enough, or that the gods are pleased with him.”

“My mother!” I said.

“Oh, no, sister ; no ; you would not say my father acted wickedly about my mother. No ; cruel and bitter as I felt was the loss of my beloved mother, it was right. Nothing but her death— instant death—could have wiped out the disgrace. My father was right there ; but in some of these old Hindoo notions I think my father is wrong. We young men are better taught, and we think differently from the older ones ; but he is our father, and we must respect him.

“My father had been attending lately a festival which, since the English came here, they have tried to stop, though it is practised in many places. It is called the churruck, or swinging-poojah. A large beam with a cross-pole, like a gallows, is erected ; from the end of the cross-pole two long ropes are suspended ; on the other end of the ropes sharp iron

hooks are fastened. Some poor superstitious man is persuaded by the Brahmin priests that he will do God service by having these great hooks run into his flesh under the shoulders, and then being swung up into the air. They give him some strong drugs, which quite intoxicate him; then, after these hooks are placed, they bind a cloth several times around his body, so that a good part of his weight comes upon the cloth. He swings thus in the air for perhaps ten minutes; then he is detached, his wounds are dressed, and another victim takes his place. Now, my sister, the gooroo has persuaded our father to endure this suffering to bring peace to his conscience; but he would be very angry if one should speak of it."

From this time feelings of pity rather than of hate grew up in my heart towards my poor father. But my life was

a very lonely one. While numbers were in the house with me, not one heart loved me. I only saw my brother when business occasionally brought him home. My heart craved love and sympathy. In playing with and amusing the little ones of the family, I found my only pleasure and occupation.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN I had been married about eight years, my father came in one day, calling for me in a great hurry. He told me to dress myself quickly in my best sarree, and come with him.

I was much astonished at the idea of my father taking me out; such a thing had never happened in my life before. But I must ask no questions; only obey. I put on, therefore, my jewels and my finest sarree, and got into the palky that was waiting for me. My father saw me get in, covered the red cloth over me, and I was borne away. Where I was going I knew not.

Thus was I carried for many hours. I knew my father was near, for occasionally I heard his voice giving direc-

tions to the bearers. Then the palky was put down; and from what I heard, for I could see nothing, I found we were in a boat, soon gliding over the waters. At last my father opened the palky, gave me some sweetmeats and a lóta of water, but he would not answer my questions, saying I would know soon enough. At length I fell asleep, waking only when I felt the palky again lifted up and borne away. After some time being carried thus, the palky was set down. My father opened the door, and told me to get out. It was very late at night, but the moon made it light enough for me to see that we were far away from the city, on the edge of a jungle.

My father took me into a little hut that was at the side of the road; bade me sit down, while he seated himself opposite. He then said our family were becoming very degenerate and bad;

they were deserting the good old customs of their fathers ; that he had been trying for years to avert from them the anger of the gods ; but it seemed as if they would not be appeased. Now, he said, the time was come when I should perform my part by the sacrifice of myself, and thus not only gain felicity, but confer a lasting benefit on my family.

As my father spoke I started up in horror, not knowing what he was about to do with me.

He sternly commanded me to be seated. He then told me my husband had died of cholera, therefore he had brought me to perform the suttee, which was not only what was my duty, but should be my pleasure.* He said that each of the other wives were anxious to be the privileged one. It was consid-

* The suttee is the immolation of a widow, by being burned alive on the funeral pyre with the body of her deceased husband.

ered a much greater privilege, because my husband was a Koolenee Brahmin. But as I was the first wife, though I had not seen him for several years, I was entitled to this high honor; and on no account would my father allow any other to take my place.

Oh, the agony of that night! I flung myself at my father's feet, imploring him to save me from such a fate, such a fearful death.

He spurned me from him in indignation that one of his family should be so degenerate, so wanting in courage as to prefer a life of scorn, ignominy, and shame—for such would be my lot, if I refused the suttee—to the prospect of so glorious and triumphant a death, with an immediate entrance into heaven, instead of going into the body of some unclean animal.

All he said to quiet me was in vain.

I screamed with fear, tore my hair, beat myself about until I fell exhausted on the floor. I had nothing to live for—no hope; but still I was young, I was in health, and life itself was sweet. This death! ah, it was fearful; and then the dread unknown beyond!

While I lay exhausted in the corner of the room I heard voices, and in a few minutes some men came in bearing a bier. My father called me to come and look at my husband, but I would not move. He then lifted me in his arms, and bore me to the side of the corpse. The work of dissolution had progressed so far that I could not recognize him who was once my husband. A heavy, sickly odor proceeded from the body. My father then left the hut, fastening me in, and went to give orders and oversee the preparations of the funeral pyre, leaving me with the dead body.

Oh, what a night that was! no hope for time, no hope for eternity; for if the sacrifice is not made willingly, the poor sufferer has to undergo some amount of future punishment. It was in vain I sought to escape from the hut. It was too well secured; and if I could have gotten outside, I knew not where to flee.

At length the day began to dawn. I knew then I had but an hour to live; but by my previous violence I had so exhausted myself, that resistance seemed no longer possible; they did with me as they pleased. My father and the gooroo came into the hut, and gave me a lota of water to drink. I eagerly seized it, took a long draught of it, and as I was very thirsty. As I put the lota down, I remember thinking the water had a strange taste. In a few minutes I began to feel as if in a dream. I felt as if I were walking in the air, could dance and

sing, and would have done all sorts of foolish things if I had not been restrained.

The Brahmin priests are very skilful in the use of drugs; and doubtless, when the poor victims have met this dreadful fate with composure, or even exultation, as has sometimes been described, it has been from the effects of these powerful narcotics. Certainly in this there is mercy; it deprives death of its worst terrors, those of the mind, and probably in some cases the victim expires without much suffering. If the wood of the pyre was green, she might die of suffocation ere the flames reached her body.

After the sun rose, I was taken out and seated near the pyre. The dead body was laid beside me, with the head placed on my lap. When I lifted my eyes, I was startled to see a crowd of human faces all gazing at me. I had

never seen so many men before, and I drew my chuddah over my face in shame. Near me were a number of priests with gongs, trumpets, and cymbals, with which they made a deafening noise, so that if the victim screamed, the sound of her voice would be completely overpowered.

As I have said, I sat with the ghastly head of my husband in my lap, the crowd growing more dense. Now the fatal moment had arrived; the priests had gone through all their prayers and ceremonies. My father approached, told me to take off my jewels and chains, and give them to him. Afterwards they were given to the gooroo and other priests. While I did this the corpse was lifted up, and laid on the wood; my father, taking me by the arm, assisted me to mount the pyre.

The fear of the eyes of those men for

the instant overpowered my dread of the flames. The dose they had given me was not strong enough to produce drowsiness, as they expected, and just then its effects began to pass away, leaving every feeling and sensation more intensified than before. I lay down, however, as my father bade me, placed my arm under my husband's head, and closed my eyes.

Amid a tumultuous noise, beating of drums, clashing of cymbals, blowing of horns, shrieks and shouts from the priests, my father took a lighted torch and applied it to the four corners of the pile. The wood being dry, soon began to blaze furiously. I bore the anguish as long as I could, then tossing my husband's body from me, I flung myself from the pile on to the ground. Instantly my father and several priests lifted me, and with many execrations put me

again upon the funeral pyre ; but once more, in the intensity of my sufferings, I leaped up, and sprang to the ground. In falling, I must have struek my head and become unconseious, for I knew nothing for several days.

On recovering my senses I found myself lying on a clean bed, a white sheet over me, and on a table were glasses and arteies I had never seen before. A pleasant-looking Bengali girl was sitting near, reading, and dressed differently from any I had seen. I looked in perfect bewilderment, then asked, "Where am I?"

Nistarenee, the girl, started at the sound of my voice, came to look at me, and then said, "Oh, you are better. I will call the ma'am sahib."

In a few minutes she returned with a white lady. Dear lady! how I shall love you to all eternity. She came up to my

bed, looked at me with a kind, loving expression; but I covered my head in fear and terror, for I had never seen a white person before.

“Poor ehild! You see she is afraid of me. Nistarenee, you must attend to her until she knows me better, and learns not to fear me. I see my very presence exeites her. I will leave her.”

As she spoke in Bengali, I understood what she said. I pulled away the covering, and watched her as she left the room; then I eagerly demanded again, “Where am I? Am I with Christians?”

“You must not talk now, dear; take this drink and go to sleep, and when you wake, feeling better, I will tell you all.”

“Am I with those polluted, degraded Christians of whom I have heard so much? and do you want to make me drink their vile drink, and lose my caste?”

She told me that I had been very ill; during my unconseious hours I had drank many times.

I then angrily struck the cup out of her hand, and burst out crying. She tried to soothe me, and finally I fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. On awaking I called for water, being very thirsty. I drained the cup unconsciously; then dashing it away, exclaimed, "I am for ever lost!" and screamed so violently that poor Nistarenee was frightened, and brought in the ma'am sahib.

The dear lady approached my bed, saying in a kind, calm. very decided tone, "My child, you must stop this instantly and listen to me."

In a moment my sobs were stifled; I lay still as death. Nor when she uncovered me, and began to dress the wounds I now became aware of, did I move a muscle or utter a sound.

She then smoothed back my hair, caressingly patted my cheeks and hands. "And now, my child," she said, "I think it best to tell you why and how you came here, as you seem to have forgotten about it. I think, if you know all, it will make you better satisfied to remain quiet."

She said that her husband and herself were missionaries ; that the night before the suttee occurred, the magistrate of the place received a notice of the fact. He informed her husband, the padre sahib, as the missionary is always called, that he was going with a company of soldiers to the place in order to prevent it, and asked him to go with them. They arrived, and rode into the midst of the crowd just when I had flung myself the second time out of the flames.

As soon as the magistrate arrived the crowd scattered, and were soon lost in

the jungle. These were but spectators, and could not be punished. The only guilty person they succeeded in capturing was an old gooroo, whom they sent to prison for seven years. My father could nowhere be found.

In the mean time the missionary placed me on the bier, which had borne the dead body of my husband. He dipped some rags in oil that he brought with him, bound them on my wounds, and then carried me to his mission station. Here I lay for many days between life and death, ere my wounds began to heal; and now the dear lady called upon me to thank the good God who had been so kind to me.

When I heard all this, I looked at her with astonishment. "Yes," I said, "I remember it all; but why do you come near me? I am a pariah,* an outcast.

* If a woman escapes after being brought to the suttee,

Don't you know you will be polluted by touching me?"

"My poor child," the dear lady said, still stroking my face, "I do not feel polluted by touching you; and you know among your own people you have lost caste, and may not go back to them. Being among Christians now, cannot harm you, so try to get well; and remember there is no one here who despises you, or thinks that your touch pollutes them."

I caught her hand, held it to my lips, and said: "You are like an angel;* but will not all these Bengalees hate and despise me?"

she is considered the vilest outcast. No member of her family, not even her own child, dare speak to her, or if dying, give her a drop of water. She generally perishes in the utmost misery, and is supposed to pass after death into the body of some reptile; and any one who shall speak to or help her, will likewise inhabit the body of some animal.

* The Hindoos have a faint idea of some sort of superior heavenly beings.

“No, no, my child; they will do all they can to help you; to teach you that we are all children of one great God—the God of love. They will tell you that we are all sinners, and polluted in God’s eyes, as well as you; but that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, will take away all sins, both yours and mine.”

“Jesus Christ! that was God’s Son. Uncle Chundro told me about him, long, long ago. But I forget; tell me more about him.”

“I will, my child; but you have talked enough. Rest now; and before you sleep say this little prayer: ‘Lord Jesus, forgive my sins, and help me to know thee.’”

After this I always longed for the presence of the kind lady who addressed me as “dear child!” and no one had done that, since my mother’s death. Thus I associated her with my mother,

and therefore her words had greater weight with me, than the words of any one else. Oh, ye who would win souls to Christ, be wise in this, that ye win by love.

CHAPTER XV.

AND now my story of Kardoo, the Hindoo zenana-girl, is nearly finished. It was many months before I got quite well; for the burns I received by the fire were very deep, and have made me a cripple for life.

During this time the dear lady and Nistarenec took pains to enlighten my dark mind. They taught me to read and to sew; and though I learned the folly of idolatry, yet it was long, long before I became a real Christian; before I could "receive the truth as it is in Jesus." I was continually trying to do something by which I could merit forgiveness. I would sometimes think, Oh, if I could be more sorry for my sins—if I could repent more bitterly—

could only love Christ more ! I wanted to do something to earn God's forgiveness, instead of going to him just as I was, and believing that, although guilty, he had promised to receive me for Christ's sake, and take my heart and cleanse it and sanctify it himself, and make me what he would have me to be. My poor heathen notions of trying to merit pardon clung to me ; and what is strange, I have found among those who were born and lived in a Christian land the same heathen ideas of thinking they must do something, by prayer, repentance, or almsgiving, to merit the favor of God.

I can well remember the day when a flood of light poured in upon my soul. It was a beautiful Sabbath evening, some months after my restoration to health. I had been sitting thinking over all God's dealings with me in my past life ; feeling

that my heart should be full of love and deep gratitude to him, for all his mereies to me ; wishing, “ Oh, if I could do some great thing for him ! then I should believe I was really God’s child ; received and forgiven by him.”

That evening our dear padre sahib preached to us from the parable of the prodigal son. After describing the iniquity and degradation of the lost one, he told us that when “ he came to himself ” he had not correct views of his father. He did not put perfect trust and confidence in that father’s forgiving love. And he said : “ I will go to him and say, Let me be as one of thy hired servants.” He wanted to work out by his own good conduct, a title to his father’s forgiveness. This is always the awakened sinner’s first thought—“ I must do something.” But when he comes to that father’s presence, and

finds that, degraded as he is, his father runs to meet him—when he feels the fond clasp of his arms and the warm kiss upon his cheek, then he fully realizes that father's love. And what does he say now? He confesses his sin and relents, saying: "Father, I have sinned; I am not worthy to be called thy son." Not one word does he add about being a hired servant, working for forgiveness. He feels that it would wound that fond, loving heart, for an instant to distrust the free pardon or the tender love lavished upon him. He receives the father's expressions of love with a heart too full to speak. He immediately takes the place of a child. He has still much about him of evil habits, of the ragged garments, and of the pollution he has contracted in his wanderings. His father does not wait until he was arrayed in clean garments before he

acknowledged him: Now that he has owned and received him as his child, he will see that the ragged, filthy garments are exchanged for those befitting his son.

Thus our heavenly Father runs to meet us, when he sees us returning. He receives us just as we are—his children. And when he has welcomed us, he takes off our filthy garments, and puts on us the robes of Christ's righteousness. Then he expects from us the fond love of children, not the duty of hired servants. Believe God; trust him; take him at his word.

It was during this discourse that a flood of light poured into my soul. From that time I felt that God was my Father—God in Christ—and that I was indeed his reconciled child. I no longer wanted to do some great thing to prove my love for him; but I felt that each

little act and word should show forth his love and praise. Every duty seemed now different, because I was doing it to please my loving Father.

During my long sickness, I became a proficient in sewing, and my work was much praised. When I recovered, I told the ma'am sahib that though I could do little requiring active exercise, I could help her in teaching the little ones to sew; for we had a large orphan-school on the mission premises. At first I used to get very impatient with the stupidity of the children; but when I remembered they were our Father's little ones, that I was teaching them for Him, the work seemed lighter, and many a happy hour have I since passed in teaching them Bible stories and telling them of the love of Christ. How often have I prayed that the day may soon come when of India it may be said:

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“And all her sons are taught of God,” and when every parent shall delight to tell to his children the words of Christ.

I had been living very peacefully and happily, and I trust usefully, in my home at the mission station for some years. I had not heard any thing of my family during this time; but I knew I was degraded, was an outcast from them, that they never wished to see or hear from me; and all I could do was to pray for them. I often thought of my poor father, wondered if he was still going on pilgrimages, still trying to inflict pain on his body to atone for the sin of his soul.

One day while sitting at work, I saw our padre sahib, who had been away for a few days, come into the compound,*

* The houses of Europeans in India stand in a garden or yard with a high wall around. Inside the walls are also the servants' houses, stables, etc., and on mission

and with him were some men carrying what appeared to be a dead body on a bier. There was a little house near by, unoccupied; into this they carried the man, laid him on a bed, and in a little while after I saw the doctor go in.

At evening worship, the padre sahib told us that on his return from his tour he had passed through the village of S——,* forgetting it was the time of the feast of Juggernaut. While he waited to let the ear and the crowd pass him, two wretched jogees, or fakirs, flung themselves in front of the ponderous machine. It passed over them instantly. The police came, scattered the crowd right and left, but it was too late; one was dead, the other had both his legs

premises, the church, schoolhouse, etc., all stand within these walls. This is called the compound.

* A place sacred to Juggernaut, where a large car is always kept, and where the feast is celebrated every year by great crowds, with rejoicings, though the gooroos now try to prevent the sacrifice of human life.

crushed in a frightful manner. The police did not know what to do with him, and no one knew any thing of him. So our padre sahib had him brought to our house.

He said he had called a Brahmin to come and cook for him,* and told us all, that we must be careful not to go near or touch the cooking vessels that were used for him, as he knew the man would rather starve to death than eat any thing that a Christian had touched. "Some of you may go in to see him, if you like," he added, "and point him to the only Atonement for sin. The doctor tells me he cannot recover, but he may live for weeks, perhaps months."

The next day I went in to see the sick man. His hair was shaved from his head, except one patch behind. This

* Orthodox Hindoos would rather starve than eat food cooked by any other than a Brahmin.

was allowed to grow long, and was plaited in several small braids. Each braid was matted together with the excrements of the cow. This, also, mixed with earth, was smeared in spots all over his body. His only clothing was a small scrap of filthy rag around his loins.

In this disgusting object, I recognized my once noble-looking father. With a loud cry I rushed towards him. He then recognized me, and with expressions of extreme loathing, he ordered me away from him.

“What! a vile outcast like you dare to approach one so holy as I!” With many curses he bade me begone, and not pollute the air he breathed with my presence. I hastily retired in deep grief. Our sahib told me afterwards I could pray for him, but in the present condition of his mind I had better not

see him, as even the sight of me threw him into such paroxysms of rage, that they feared it would kill him. Thus I had to be content with the knowledge that he was visited by older and more experienced Christians than myself, and that they would do all they could for his soul. I could only pray for him.

He lingered for three months. One day I was told that he asked for me : I went hastily into his hut. He held out his hand. I took it eagerly, kissing it, and knelt by his side. He had changed much, since his first appearance among us. He had permitted the filthy, matted hair to be cut off, his head and body to be washed, though this must be done in Ganges water, and his body was more decently covered than before, with a clean cloth.

He laid his hand upon my head, and said, " We are both wicked sinners, my

child ; I feel that all I have done has not won for me the favor of the great God ; but they tell me, that his Son died to take away our sins. God grant it may be so." He fell back dead.

My grief was deep for my father, though it was not destitute of hope ; for I have strong faith that through the blood of Christ I shall meet my father, my uncle Chundro, and Berash in heaven. We know our blessed Saviour has said, "To whom little is given, of them little will be required."

How my heart leaps with joy, in the hope that light is now dawning upon my poor heathen sisters. Kind ladies from Christian lands, even from far-off America, are spending their days in our prison homes, telling of Jesus and his love. Alas, my beautiful mother, that you did not live to hear these sweet words, and

to teach to us, your children, the true worship of the true God.

And now my tale is told. If I ever meet you in heaven, I shall reach it in the same way you will—as a poor sinner saved by grace. Let me, as a daughter of India, thank you that you are working for her deliverance from the gross darkness of heathenism; and to your work, let me beg you, join your earnest prayers that her children may soon turn from their dumb idols to serve the living God. Each soul brought to God by your prayers, will adorn as a bright jewel the crown that you will cast at the Redeemer's feet.

That every one who reads these pages may have many such bright jewels in their heavenly diadem, is the earnest prayer of Kardoo, the once Hindoo zennana-girl.





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